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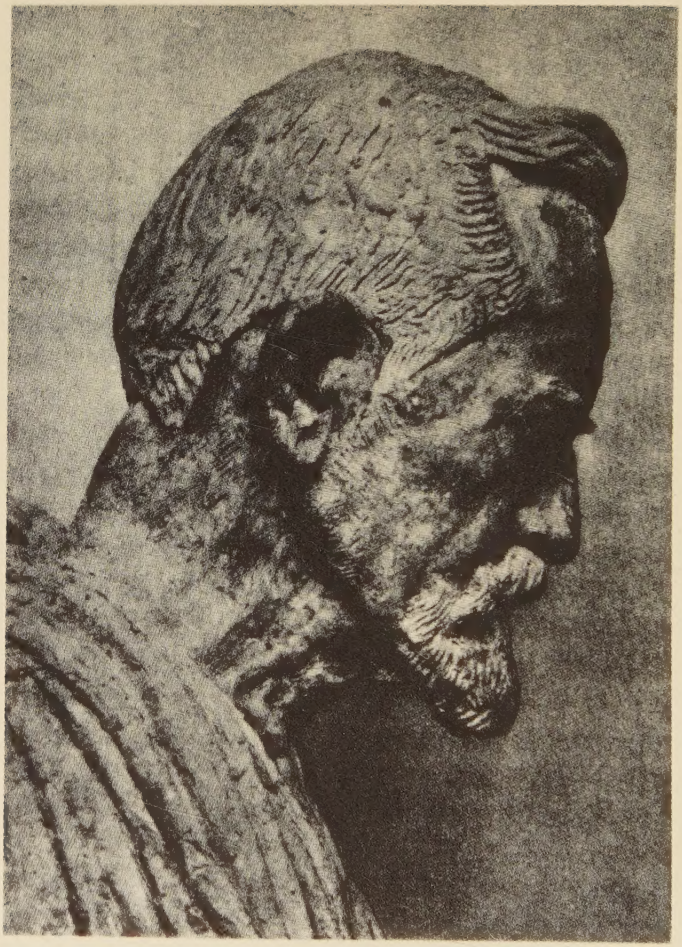
THE GORGON'S HEAD

AND OTHER LITERARY PIECES



James George Frazer

Emery Walker ph. sc.

THE GORGON'S HEAD

AND OTHER LITERARY PIECES

BY

SIR JAMES GEORGE FRAZER

O.M., F.R.S., F.B.A.

FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE
MEMBRE CORRESPONDANT DE L'INSTITUT DE FRANCE
COMMANDEUR DE LA LÉGION D'HONNEUR

WITH A PREFACE
BY
ANATOLE FRANCE

AND A PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR
FROM THE BUST
BY
ANTOINE BOURDELLE

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HAEC FOLIA SERA ET IAMIAM FORSITAN PERITURA

DUM VIVUNT ADHUC VIRENTQUE

SACRA ESSE VOLUI

CARO AMICO

WILLIAM WYSE

QUOCUM OLIM ET RURA PERAGRARE AMOENA

ET ATTICIS MORANTEM FRANGERE DIEM SERMONIBUS SOLEBAM

UT NOSTRAE MULTOS PER ANNOS CONIUNCTAE AMICITIAE

BREVIBUS HUIUSCE QUI LABITUR ANNI ROSIS

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PREFACE BY ANATOLE FRANCE

Sir James-George Frazer a étudié les origines humaines par des méthodes nouvelles et avec des moyens qu'on n'avait pas encore employés. C'est là, certes, un grand point. Au rebours de Petit-Jean qui disait : " Ce que je sais le mieux, c'est mon commencement ", l'homme ignora longtemps ses origines et il en sait encore peu de chose. Il doit à Sir James-George Frazer d'entrevoir enfin comment il a passé de la barbarie à la civilisation.

C'est par l'étude des sauvages que ce savant nous donne des connaissances nouvelles sur la primitive humanité. Je n'avais pas besoin de dire ce que tout le monde sait ; mais on a plaisir à voir naître une science nouvelle.

A chaque génération la connaissance de l'homme s'étend et s'approfondit. Ce que Montesquieu fut dans son temps, Frazer l'est dans le nôtre et la différence de leurs œuvres montre le progrès des idées.

Frazer nous a donné de l'homme la connaissance la plus vaste et la plus neuve. Ce nom d'anthropologiste qui, chez nous, garde encore une signification étroite prend avec lui le sens le plus large. Il nous a fait entrer dans la pensée des barbares d'aujourd'hui et des temps lointains ; il a éclairé d'une lumière nouvelle cette antiquité grecque et latine que nous pensions connaître ; il a substitué aux fables que

l'homme imagine pour expliquer sa propre origine les premières données d'une science rigoureuse, qui n'existait pas avant lui.

Critique sévère de lui-même, il a créé une méthode scrupuleuse et sûre, qui s'ajoute aux instruments que l'homme se forge péniblement pour approcher de la vérité.

Mais il ne m'appartient pas d'exposer au public l'œuvre si grande de Sir James-George Frazer. C'est déjà un honneur qui passe ce qui m'est dû de présenter aux amis de la science, des arts et de la beauté, les beaux essais qu'on va lire et qui feront penser aux délassements de Renan.

ANATOLE FRANCE.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This book is in substance a new and enlarged edition of *Sir Roger de Coverley and other Literary Pieces* with a change of title, *The Gorgon's Head* being substituted for *Sir Roger de Coverley*, much as Sir Roger's own head was displaced by that of the Saracen on the sign-board of the inn. The reason for the change is that the old title seems to have created a certain amount of misapprehension in the minds of my readers and still more perhaps of those who know the book only by name. Many appear to think that the pieces about Sir Roger de Coverley are not by me but by Addison, and that I have only selected them from among his essays in the *Spectator* with criticisms or comments of my own. The mistake is all the more excusable because I have in fact edited a selection of Addison's essays in two volumes. Others, again, have imagined that the pieces in question contain authentic details concerning the Spectator Club and the history of the de Coverleys, which I had ascertained by laborious researches in the archives of Coverley Hall. One of my readers even applied to the British Museum for aid in tracing the sources from which I had drawn my account of the family, and naturally failing to obtain any satisfaction in that quarter he courteously appealed to me to furnish him with the desired information.

In order, therefore, to dissipate these and the like

misunderstandings and to obviate, as far as possible, their recurrence in the future, I have altered the title of the book, and I now plainly declare that all the pieces relating to Sir Roger de Coverley and his friends are purely imaginary, and that though I have borrowed the characters created by the genius of Addison, I have allowed them to act and talk after their own fashion, or what has appeared to me such, in scenes and circumstances conjured up by my own fancy and not by that of their illustrious creator. In short, Sir Roger and his friends are dream figures: the old Hall is a dream: my visit to it was a dream; and now that I finally dismiss it and them, the whole unsubstantial pageant seems to fade away, leaving not a rack behind. Yet I trust that after this frank avowal my good-natured readers will not think less kindly of me and of the puppets which I have made to dance for a few moments before them on a visionary stage. I have tried to carry my readers back with me to the days, now far away, of Queen Anne, and to let fall no word or hint that could break and dispel the illusion. The war of which the mimick actors speak is not the war which has convulsed the world in our time. The battles of which the tidings set the bells of London ringing and the Tower guns booming were fought long ago, and victors and vanquished have long slept peacefully beside each other in the common dust. And as it was with the generation of Queen Anne, so in due time it will be with the generation of King George the Fifth. It, too, will soon be only a memory, and the men and women of our day will seem as ghostly and unreal to our descendants as our ancestors now appear

to us, looming faint and dim through the mists of the past. So it has been and so it will be. "We are such stuff as dreams are made of, and our little life is rounded with a sleep." Yet the attempt to recall those dim figures from the dusty past is something more than an idle amusement if, by reminding us of our own mortality and the transitoriness of all earthly things, it teaches us to be more charitable to others, more tender to those from whom we differ, remembering that the hot blood of to-day will soon be cold enough and the loud voices silent for ever.

So much for my puppets of the days of Queen Anne. It is hardly necessary for me to make a similar disclaimer in regard to the actors in the pageant of the Gorgon's Head, whom I have now set in the front of my little stage. Nobody is likely to suppose that they ever trod the earth in flesh and blood. I will only say that, while I have borrowed the broad outline of the tale from the immortal storehouse of Greek mythology, I have filled in the colours and details from my own imagination. The story was written many years ago as a recreation after the somewhat tedious task of translating Pausanias into English, when my head was still full of ancient Greece and my fancy still touched by "all Olympus' faded hierarchy".

To a French translation of *Sir Roger de Coverley and other Literary Pieces* the late Anatole France did me the high honour of contributing a preface, and I am proud to reproduce it, in the original French, in the present English edition as a memorial of the friendly personal relations I was privileged to enjoy for some years with that great writer.

The other pieces which appear in this edition for the first time will speak for themselves. Most of them have been published, though not collected, before. Almost the only exception is the piece *Pax Occidentis, a League of the West*, which was stillborn in 1906, the editor to whom it was then offered for publication having declined to insert it in his magazine. I print it word for word as I wrote it more than twenty years ago. The piece may perhaps have a certain historical interest as reflecting the thoughts and aspirations of ardent friends of peace who then saw the ominous shadow of war creeping over Europe and cast about for the best means of exorcizing the dreadful phantom.

J. G. Frazer.

London,
6th January 1927.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

I THANK the publishers and editors of the books and journals mentioned below for their courteous permission to reprint the following pieces in this volume. " A Visit to Coverley Hall " was prefixed to a selection of Addison's essays (Macmillan & Co., London, 1915). " The Political Oracle ", " Captain Sentry on the French ", and " William Cowper : an Appreciation " were published in *The Nineteenth Century and After* (May 1921 and June 1920). " Sir Roger in Cambridge ", " Sir Roger in Covent Garden ", " Sir Roger in the Temple ", and " A Dream of Cambridge " were contributed to *The Saturday Review* (27th March, 10th April 1915 ; 19th February, 2nd December 1916). " Roman Life in the Time of Pliny the Younger " and " London Life in the Time of Addison " appeared, in an abridged form, in *The Quarterly Review* (vol. ccxxxvi., 1921, and vol. ccxxxvii., 1922). The memoir of Cowper was prefixed to a selection of his letters (Macmillan & Co., London, 1912). The notice of William Robertson Smith and " For a Scrap of Paper " were published in *The Fortnightly Review* (June 1894 ; September 1916). The biographical sketches of Fison and Howitt appeared in *Folk-lore* (30th June 1909). The obituary notice of Albert Houtin was published in *The Times* (4th August 1926). The allocution " Sur l'Étude des Origines humaines " was printed in *La Renaissance* (17th December 1921). The essay " Condorcet on Human Progress " and the letter " The Road to the Scaffold " were published in *The Times Literary Supplement* (30th March, 20th April 1922). The letter " Our Debt to France " appeared in *The Morning Post* (1st July 1925) ; " French and English Chivalry " in *The French Quarterly* (January 1919) ; " The Taking of the Redoubt " in *The Cambridge Review* (10th March 1886) ; " Veterans of the Old Guard " in *Christ's College Magazine* (No. 24, Lent Term, 1894) ; and " Modern Italy and Greece " in *The Book of Italy* (T. Fisher Unwin, London,

1916). " My Old Study " is taken from the preface to my translation of Pausanias (Macmillan & Co., London, 1898), and " Life's Fitful Feve " and " Beyond the Shadows " from the prefaces to the first and second editions of *Passages of the Bible chosen for their Literary Beauty and Interest* (A. & C. Black, London, 1895 and 1909).

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THE GORGON'S HEAD

A FANTASIA

Once upon a time, long, long ago, there was a king who had a beautiful daughter. But before she was born a magician had told the king that, when she grew up, she would be the mother of a boy who would kill the king, his grandfather, and rule over many lands. So the king said, "She shall never marry," and he shut her up when she was quite a little girl in a high tower on the top of a lonely mountain. Years rolled on, and the princess grew to be as beautiful as the sun, but still she was kept in the high lonely tower, and her father would not hear of her going out. Well, one day she was sitting and looking out of the window, wondering whether any prince would ever come to free and marry her, when she heard a strange noise overhead, and looking up she saw that gold, real shining gold, was pouring through a hole in the roof and falling in a heap on the floor. Up she jumped, and spread out her skirt to catch it, till her lap was full. Then a voice, a sweet strange voice, cried, "Fairy gold, fairy gold, and a fairy's bride," and with that all the gold vanished away, and she was left standing and holding out her empty lap. Then she sat down and cried, for she did not understand that the gold was fairy gold, and that she was a fairy's bride.

Well, spring passed and summer passed, and when the leaves in the forest were turning yellow and red, and the swallows were gathering in flocks and twittering before they flew away, her baby was born. But her father was angry and said, " You must go away, you and the brat ". So he led her down to the seashore, her and the child. It was night. Dark clouds hid the sky, the wind sighed in the branches overhead, and the cold water lapped at their feet. A little shallop was tossing on the waves. The king drew it in, and put his daughter and the child into it, and pushed it away. Out the little boat drifted to sea, sad at heart sat the mother clasping her sleeping babe to her breast. Its red cloak fluttered in the wind, the spray dashed over it, but it slept peacefully, smiling in its sleep. It seemed as if some angel watched over the mother and her child, for soon the wind fell, the moon broke through the flying clouds, and down a broad path of shimmering silver floated the little boat, a black speck tossing on the moonlit sea.

At break of day a fisherman, putting out to cast his nets, found the shallop with its precious freight. Touched with pity he took the mother and child to his home. Now he was a good man and feared God, and his wife was like-minded. They were thrifty, too, and had saved a little money ; so after consulting together they proposed to buy a cottage for Danaë (for that was the princess's name) at the end of the fishing village where they lived. But Danaë said no, after that dreadful night she could never bear to look at the sea again. So it was arranged that she should go to live at a village up among the hills where the fisherman had friends. Here, with the help of the kind neighbours, a cottage was bought

for her. It stood at the edge of a wood where the nightingales sang in summer. Its walls were overgrown with vines, sweet-briar, and eglantine: the swallows built their nests in the broad thatched eaves of the high-pitched roof; and behind it bickered a brook, where water-lilies grew and broad sedge with its yellow flowers. Here the mother lived, earning a livelihood for herself and her boy by spinning; and in this quiet retreat the years passed peacefully and happily away.

The king of the country was Polydectes, a wicked and cruel man. His evil doings used to furnish the theme of thrilling tales told to awe-struck listeners by many a cottage fire on winter nights. But his castle was far away and the villagers knew of his bad deeds only by hearsay.

In time the boy, whose name was Perseus, grew to be a handsome youth and a great help and comfort to his mother. None of the village lads was a match for him in strength and speed; but he used his strength not to oppress but to protect the weak and helpless, and all the bullies for miles round feared and hated him, for there was not one of them that had not felt the weight of his hand.

One day, it was a day in autumn—how well they both remembered it afterwards—the mother and son had been out together in the wood gathering sticks for the fire, and were sitting down at the side of the path to rest, when a pack of hounds in full cry dashed past, closely followed by the huntsmen. The foremost of these had already galloped past and disappeared, when a second group appeared riding more leisurely. In the centre rode one whose rich dress and magnificent horse at once arrested the eye

Perseus, who had once been at the palace, immediately recognized the splendid horseman. "It is His Majesty," he said, and stood up, and his mother with him. As the king was riding past, he caught sight of the mother and son, and reined up abruptly. He was a middle-aged man, sinewy and well-built. His oval, clean-shaven face was of a dark olive complexion; his features keen, mobile, expressive; his deeply-set eyes large, black, penetrating. Thin iron-grey hair floated lightly about his temples.

"Who are these?" he demanded of one of the riders, who by the sober cut of his garments seemed to be a secretary or minister. "Please, your Majesty," was the reply, "only a spinster of the village we have just passed and her son." The king turned his bold black eyes on Danaë till she hung her head and blushed. "On my word, a notable wench," he said. "And you, Sir Whipper-Snapper," he continued, addressing Perseus, "who are you?" "My name is Perseus, and I am your Majesty's most humble servant." "A courtier in fustian!" laughed the king; "why, Glaucus," he went on, turning to an exquisite in his suite, "you couldn't have said it yourself with a grander air than this chawbacon." He laughed again, and the laugh was echoed by the obsequious courtiers; but the hot blood rushed to Perseus' face. The king remained silent for a little, tapping his riding-boot meditatively with his whip and bending his keen gaze alternately on mother and son. At last he abruptly resumed the conversation at the point where it had been broken off. "Fine words, young man," he said, "but will you make them good?" "With my life, your Majesty," was the reply. The king smiled a smile that was not pleasant

to look at. "I don't ask so much as that," said he, "but I should like to have the head of the Gorgon Medusa. Will you get it for me?" At the dreaded name a thrill visibly ran through the group of courtiers. Danaë clasped her son's arm convulsively and tried to look in his face beseechingly, but his eyes were fixed on the king; he had drawn himself up to his full height; he was pale now except for a red spot on either cheek. "I will try, your Majesty," was all he said. "Good, I will reward you. Come, gentlemen," said the king, breaking off, "we have fallen behind. Let us rejoin the hunt." And without deigning another look at Perseus or his mother, he put spurs to his horse and the whole band soon clattered out of sight.

No sooner were they gone than Danaë fell on her son's neck, weeping and imploring him not to attempt the perilous task. But all her prayers and entreaties were in vain. He had passed his word, the youth said, and he would never go back upon it; the king should see what stuff he was made of. "Besides, mother," he added in a softer tone, "the king said he would reward me. He will give me heaps of money or a place at court; and then, you know, you will never need to wear your eyes out over that spinning any more." Finding that all remonstrances were fruitless, his mother dried her eyes and resigned herself to the inevitable. She had a brave spirit, too, as became the daughter of a long line of kings; so when she saw that her son was resolved, she set herself, with a courage like his own, to conceal her heart-breaking sorrow lest it should distress and unman him, and to do everything in her power to cheer and encourage him. It was a sad evening in the little

cottage beside the wood. The few preparations were soon made, and then mother and son sat hand in hand talking long and earnestly.

Next morning at daybreak he set out. His mother accompanied him to the garden gate, and there they parted. Neither said much, their hearts were too full. When he looked back from the turn in the road which would carry him out of sight, she was still standing at the gate looking after him : the roses that twined about the rustic arch were above her head and their shadow on her face.

The morning air was fresh and exhilarating, yet blent with that subtle, inexpressible breath of decay which saddens even the loveliest autumn mornings as with a regret for departed summer or a presage of approaching winter. Setting his face westward, Perseus walked briskly on. He had soon passed through the dear, familiar village, where all was yet quiet and still. Only the blue smoke curling here and there from a chimney betokened that the cottagers were afoot and preparing for the work of the day. Now the road wound through fields where the harvest lay gathered in sheaves or still waved to the morning breeze like a golden sea. Now it passed through a hamlet or little thorp, where cottage homes, with their yellow beehives and latticed windows, peeping through climbing rose-bushes and trellised vines, smiled shyly at the traveller. Then again it led over breezy uplands whence the eye wandered with delight across a wide rolling country which, diversified with meadow, wood, and river, stretched away for miles to melt into tenderest blue on the horizon. Or again descending it would wind by the lonely shore of some broad water, on whose farther side the hills, grey with

rocks above, green with trees and grass below, fell in softly rounded slopes and sunny knolls to meet their fairy sisters of the water, those inverted images that, mirrored with a faint quivering motion, slept on the tranquil bosom of the lake.

Perseus had begun by inquiring of the people he met whether they could direct him to the object of his search. But the result of his inquiries was disappointing. The bumpkins whom he asked only scratched their heads or burst into a horse laugh. One superior person of bland exterior whom he ventured to address, listened with polite attention to all he had to say; but when Perseus had quite finished, he only said "Ah", smiled sweetly, and went on his way, to all appearance, rejoicing. An old dame who sat sunning herself at her cottage door, when she at last fully comprehended his meaning (he had to scream very loudly to make her hear, for she was nearly as deaf as her own door-post), clapped her hands to her ears (a precaution which in the circumstance seemed almost superfluous) and hobbled shrieking into the house. Baffled and discouraged, Perseus soon gave up inquiring and resolved to go on his way without asking help or direction from any one.

By this time the sun was low down on the western hills. Already the traveller had met teams of oxen plodding wearily homeward, dragging behind them the upturned plough, and had received and answered the rough "Good-night" of the attendant swains. The tinkling of bells in distant sheepfolds, the hum of the bats and beetles as they wheeled droning past, or the solitary bark of a dog, were the only sounds that broke the stillness of the autumn evening. As the crimson glow slowly faded in the west, giving place

first to a pale pure green, which in turn passed by an insensible transition into the steel blue of the nightly sky, one by one the stars shone out cold and calm, and one by one the lights in the cottage windows began to twinkle through the evening shadows, reminding the belated and weary wayfarer of the home from which every step was taking him farther and farther away. The familiar room rose up before him, now lit by the flickering glow of the cheerful firelight. His mother, he felt sure, was standing at the window looking down the road where he had passed out of her sight that morning, and where, at the last turning, he had stopped to look back and wave her once more good-bye. Only that morning! How long it seemed since then, and with how different feelings now, in the stillness and darkness of approaching night, he regarded the fatal enterprise on which he had embarked. Full of these melancholy thoughts, he paused and looked back. The moon was now rising. Against her bright disk, just appearing above the dark eastern ridge, the pines that fringed the summit of the hill stood out sharp and black, striking a chilly horror through the blood of the traveller, to whose high-wrought imagination they assumed an ominous character, as of spirits of darkness and of death rising up to blot out with their foul and blasting presence the light of life, of goodness, and of home. Shaking off as best he could these gloomy forebodings, he resumed his way. The moon had now fully risen; and, flooded by her brilliance, every leaf and twig, every fern and stone stood out clear and distinct as by day, but blanched with the ghostly pallor of moonlight. The shadows cast on the road by rock or tree were startling in the intensity of their blackness; and

stretched along its white expanse the moving shadow of the traveller seemed as if cut out of solid darkness with a knife.

Thus he trudged on, how long he knew not. The silence, the monotony of the motion, the dull oppression of his melancholy thoughts, all united to plunge him into an unconsciousness bordering on sleep, a state of somnolent oblivion, under the influence of which surrounding objects floated past as in a haze or a dream, undistinguished, unnoted, unremembered. From the depths of this lethargic trance he was suddenly roused by something, he could not at the moment tell what, but instinctively he felt that some momentous change had taken place and that a great, decisive crisis in his life was at hand. At the point where he thus suddenly awoke to consciousness, the road was ascending through a pine forest. On either hand the silent, solemn pines rose up, their tops glistening in the moonlight, their lower branches buried in a blackness as of the grave. Beyond them and at no great distance towered on either side of the narrow defile a range of toppling crags, whose sides, here scarped with awful precipices, there carved and hacked into gullies and torrent-beds that seemed to eat into the very entrails of the mountain, presented a bewildering succession of glaring light and deepest shadow, while the jagged pinnacles that shot up from the summit of the ridge into the deep blue of the sky oppressed the mind with a feeling of height immeasurable, a sensation as of falling, falling for eternity through an infinite abysm of space.

The condition of semi-somnolence in which the traveller had been so long plunged had passed away like a flash and had been instantaneously succeeded

by an extraordinary state of nervous tension, in which every sense seemed stretched to the utmost limit of its range, and the faculty of thought itself to be quickened and elevated to an utterly abnormal degree of vividness and power. At first he was entirely unable to point to anything which could explain the marvellous change of which he was conscious in every nerve of his body, and which seemed to thrill even the dead silence of the scene around him with a throbbing, pulsing life. But soon he became aware of a circumstance as unusual as it was startling. Right in front of and above him, at the spot where the ascending road cleft the pine forest and touched the sky-line, there shone a strange light, a light too near and diffused to be that of a setting star, too radiant and intense to be the dawn, then just beginning to lighten faintly in the east. Eagerly, with beating heart, he pressed up the steep. As he drew near, the light grew brighter, till on reaching the summit what was his amazement to see that it surrounded as with a halo the figure of a tall and stately woman, who stood on a rock by the wayside. Instantly recognizing the divine features of the goddess Athena, he bent in lowly reverence. "Thou seekest the Gorgon's head?" she asked. He bowed assent. "Know then", she pursued, "that the evil-minded Polydectes seeketh thy life and the hand of thy mother. Therefore hath he sent thee on this errand that thou mayest perish and that he may take perforce thy mother to wife. One way alone is there by which thou mayest save her and thyself. Enter into the city which lieth before thee, and when thou art come to the tavern at the sign of the Owl, shew unto the host this ring," and she handed him a curiously carved signet-ring. "He will furnish thee

with a ship wherein thou shalt sail many days till thou comest to the Land beyond the Sunset. There, by the shore of a great sea, shalt thou find the Gorgon's Cave. In front of the cave watch the Three Grey Women, who have but one eye between them, and they pass it the one to the other. Wrest it from them and cast it into the sea. Then enter into the cave and cut off the head of the Gorgon Medusa ; but in doing so, beware that thou lookest not on her countenance, for whosoever doth so, is straightway turned to stone. When thou art returned, shew the head to King Polydectes ; he will be turned to stone, but thou and thy mother shall be saved. Mark the words I am about to speak and grave them on the tablets of thy memory. See that thou tarriest not till the year is out ; for so soon as the sun shall have risen on another year, all virtue shall have gone out of the head, and thou and thy mother must infallibly perish. But now sleep and take thy rest. For verily thou hast much both to do and suffer." She ceased ; and straightway such drowsiness fell upon Perseus that he could scarce keep up his heavy eyelids while he thanked and reverenced the goddess. Then he laid him down under the rock by the roadside and fell on sleep.

When he awoke, it was broad day. The scene was the same, yet different. He still lay where he had fallen asleep under the rock on the summit of the pass, but in front of him stretched a scene which the obscurity of the night and the absorbing interest of the vision had previously hidden from his view. Below him and far off lay the sea, its blue waters sparkling in the morning light. From the height on which he stood the road descended rapidly, the pine forest being soon replaced by beech and chestnut

woods, and these in turn disappearing to make room for lawns and meadows interspersed with groves, the trees of which were too remote to be distinguished by the eye, but which even at that distance struck him with an aspect somewhat strange and exotic. At the utmost verge of the land he descried the domes and minarets of a great city glittering in the sun and sending far out into the sapphire sea long lines of stupendous masonry whereat he saw or fancied that he saw the tall masts and fluttering pennons of countless galleys. "Yonder", thought he, "is the city whither I am bound." So thinking he took the road down the hill.

Walking quickly he had soon passed the pine forest, traversed the beech and chestnut woods, and emerged on the savannahs. Even as he descended the sun grew hotter and hotter. Instead of the keen air, impregnated with the brisk smell of the pines, which he had inhaled with delight and exhilaration on the mountain height, he now breathed an atmosphere laden with the heavy perfume of flowering plants and odorous gums. The hedges were thick with white roses and entwined with honeysuckle. The pale purple bloom of the almond, drooping over the road, alternated with the dark glossy foliage and golden balls of the orange-tree or the lighter yellow of the more delicate lemon. From sunny groves of oleanders and myrtles the purl of unseen streamlets fell on the ear with a soothing murmur, a delicious suggestion of coolness in the noonday heat. For still as the road descended the heat grew more intense, the atmosphere sultrier and more oppressive. The road now wound under a continuous arch of the most luxuriant and varied foliage. Tall palms reared their graceful heads

high in air ; tree ferns with feathery crowns, cactuses twirled into endless grotesque shapes, the great sword-blades of aloes, and a thousand other strange plants with gigantic leaves and fantastic flowers, interlaced and festooned in every direction by the trailing shoots of brilliant creepers, formed a verdurous alley, across which darted unceasingly parrots and humming-birds of the most vivid plumage, crimson, blue, and green, while the hum and glitter of myriads of gay insects, glancing like sparks of fire in the subdued light that penetrated through the green canopy overhead, stunned the ear and dazzled the eye, and the sense reeled and fainted in the steaming sweetness of the incense-laden atmosphere.

The day was already on the decline when the traveller reached the city, but in the streets the bustle of traffic, which had somewhat lulled during the sultry hours of noon, was now at its height. Down long bazaars he passed, where in recesses open to the street and protected by many-coloured awnings from the glare of the sun, rich bales of costly silk, jewelled arms and precious trinkets alternated in picturesque confusion with the most luscious fruits and the fairest flowers. Eager groups crowded round the stalls haggling over the wares, while others lounged leisurely along in the grateful shade of the awnings, watching with idle curiosity the buyers and sellers, or stopping to greet and chat with their acquaintances. The centre of the street was crowded with jostling vehicles, from the stately chariot where the dusky, white-turbaned slave stood holding the sun-shade over his fairer-skinned master, down to the creaking, cumbrous waggons drawn by the slow-paced, mild-eyed oxen.

Making the best of his way through the crowded

streets, Perseus at last turned up a narrow lane out of one of the main thoroughfares and halted before a tavern. The tavern had little to distinguish it from many that he had already passed except a rude figure of an owl carved in stone over the low lintel. An awning, striped broadly with red and white, shaded the door and window, through which floated a sound of music, voices, and laughter. Perseus entered and found himself in a low room of moderate size crowded with people seated at long narrow tables, eating, drinking, and talking. In a corner a musician was twanging a lute and singing as he played, while two gaudily dressed women joined in with cracked voices. All eyes were turned on the new-comer, and a slight lull ensued, of which the musicians, whose energies had been languishing under the cold shade of neglect, hastily availed themselves to burst into a melodious bravura of uncommon strength. The curiosity of the frequenters of the tavern, however, which seemed to have been excited for a moment by Perseus' rustic dress, was soon satisfied ; they returned to their cups and platters, the noise of voices in conversation rose higher than ever, and those of the sweet singers in the corner sank to a lugubrious depth proportionate to the height to which they had lately risen.

As Perseus was looking about him for the host, a grave elderly man approached him and bowed. "Mine host of the Owl?" asked Perseus. "The same," replied the man, "what can I do for you?" "I have private business of importance," said Perseus, "may I see you alone?" "Pray step this way," said the host courteously, and pushing aside a tapestry hanging that concealed a doorway in the back wall, he led the way across a cloistered court in which a

fountain was plashing from the mouths of marble Tritons in a little grove of feathery palms and sweet-smelling flowers. Through a door in the cloister facing that by which they entered, the host ushered Perseus into a spacious apartment whose coolness struck him gratefully after the furnace-glow of the court through which they had just passed. So far as he could see in the dim light (for the room was darkened to exclude the heat), the furniture was both rich and tasteful. The footstep fell noiselessly on soft, deep carpets. Tables of inlaid wood supported vases of graceful shapes and storied sides, filled with masses of great lilies and gorgeous trumpet-flowers. The walls were hung with many-hued tapestries, works of the gay Assyrian looms; and the coffered and fretted ceiling shone resplendent with blue and gold. In a recess burned a silver lamp on a small altar, and in the depth of the recess it seemed to Perseus that he caught a glimpse of a marble image.

"And now, sir," said the host, turning to him, "may I beg to know your business?" "This ring will help to explain it," said Perseus, drawing from his bosom the signet-ring which he had received from the goddess, and handing it to the host. The latter looked at it closely, bowed deeply, and restoring it to Perseus stepped to the altar, on which he appeared to place something. As the heavy smell of incense diffused itself through the apartment, he knelt down and remained for some moments in an attitude of prayer. Then he rose, and returning to the spot where the young man stood, requested to know his pleasure. "I seek", said Perseus firmly, "the Gorgon's head." The host started and his cheek blenched visibly. "Young man," he said solemnly,

" do you know the perilous nature of the enterprise on which you are embarked ? " " I know," said Perseus, " and am resolved. Expostulation is useless." The host placed his hand on the youth's shoulder and looked him steadily in the eyes for some seconds. Then removing his hand with half a sigh he said in a changed voice, " You wish a ship, I suppose. When do you sail ? " " To-day, if possible," returned Perseus. " Then I must make arrangements immediately. Meantime, will you refresh yourself after your journey ? "

Perseus accepted the offer gladly, and the host, at his desire, led him back to the tavern, where an abundant repast of fish, cheese, bread, figs, dates, water-melons, and raisins was placed before him with a flagon of red wine. He sat in a corner of the room, shunning observation, and the other customers paid little heed to him. His thoughts were too busy with his approaching voyage to allow him to derive from the observation of the motley company by which he was surrounded the amusement and interest which at a less serious moment it might have afforded him. In about an hour's time the host returned, and, intimating that all was ready, begged Perseus to follow him.

Leaving the tavern they passed through many streets which Perseus had not yet seen. Traffic had by this time somewhat abated, but the crowds of loungers, attracted by the cooler evening air, had considerably increased. Jugglers in grotesque costumes, surrounded by curious and laughing groups, were busy plying their trade at the street corners and in the piazzas. Flower-girls offered to the passers-by a bewildering profusion of the loveliest and most fragrant flowers — orchids, camellias, roses, violets,

lotus, orange-flower, myrtle, wild thyme, jasmine, and countless more, freshly culled in the gardens that surrounded the city, or brought since morning from the distant hills. The wealth and magnificence of the city struck Perseus with amazement. They passed palace after palace, where, through stately portals, they caught glimpses of broad marble staircases and colonnaded courts, adorned with statues and fountains, and bright with the living verdure of myrtles, orange-trees, and palms.

At last, turning down a side street, they issued abruptly on the harbour. If the scenes through which they had passed had been gorgeous and imposing, that which now burst on the eyes of Perseus overpowered him with a fabulous and dream-like splendour. On either side of the harbour rose a high hill, on whose steep sides masses of rich green foliage appeared here and there among the grandiose structures which, terrace above terrace, colonnade above colonnade, towered far up into the sky, their dizzy pinnacles right against the blue being crowned by what seemed temples or palaces of white marble glistening resplendent in the sun. Farther off the descending spurs of the hills were adorned and crowded with buildings no less magnificent, while long lines of quays, thronged with the pomp of gay galleys with gilded prows and fluttering streamers, stretched seaward far as eye could reach. The whole scene was suffused, and, as it were, transfigured with an unearthly light by the dying splendour of the sun, then sinking to his rest through a towering mass of clouds and vapour, which, reflecting and diffusing his beams, wrapped sky and sea, quay and shipping, temple and palace and tower in a haze of golden glory, and cast along the waters a

burning path of rays that reached from the western horizon to the waves which, rippling onward in sparkling silver towards the spot where Perseus and his companion were standing, broke in snowy foam at their feet. Transfixed by the scene, Perseus stood silent in admiration. Then hearing his companion, who had advanced a little way, calling after him, he turned and hurried onward.

A short walk brought them to a ship which by the bustle on its deck showed plainly that it was preparing to put to sea. Porters were busy carrying stores on board, and bronzed sailors were swarming up the shrouds, hauling at ropes and hoisting sails with the quaint droning cries peculiar to their craft. The vessel was a broad, full-bellied galley, its high curved prow and stern shining with paint and gilding, its crimson pennons streaming to the wind. Mine host of the Owl made Perseus known to the captain, who was standing on the quay directing operations. These were soon completed. The host embraced Perseus not without emotion and bade him God-speed. Then Perseus stepped aboard the vessel: the ropes were cast off, the great peaked sails slowly filled and bellied, and the galley glided gently and almost imperceptibly from the quay. The adventurer seated himself on the lofty stern, and watched with interest and admiration the long lines of quays and shipping past which they were now rapidly moving. His thoughts were still full of all the sights, to him both novel and strange, which he had so lately been witnessing, and long after the vessel had cleared the harbour-mouth and, urged by a freshening breeze, was breasting with foaming prow the rolling waves of the open sea, he continued to gaze back at the towers and

temples of the great city now fast diminishing to windward.

But gradually the scenes through which he was passing diverted his thoughts both from the past and the future. The cool sea air, blowing freely round him, refreshed and invigorated him after the stifling heat of the city. Green islands floated past with little towns nestling on their sides, whose white houses flushed a rosy pink in the warm sunset light. Tall cypresses peeped over the walls, and rows of nets hung drying on the beach. Now and then a fishing-boat, with sail of russet-brown, would be seen standing into a blue creek, while on the strand the women and children waited to welcome the fisherman to his home.

Thus they sailed many days. They had long lost sight of land, and with every day the sun sank lower and lower in the sky, till at last it no longer appeared even at mid-day, and all that the forlorn mariners could see of it was a faint glow that circled slowly with the heavy hours round and round the horizon. Even this grew fainter and fainter, till at last it seemed as if the last glimmer were about to disappear and leave them shrouded in perpetual night. Then the captain knew that they were drawing near to land. One afternoon (they estimated the lapse of time now by the hour-glass alone) Perseus, oppressed by the long-continued darkness and the weight of sombre forebodings, had lain down to sleep on the deck. But his sleep was troubled and he dreamed a dream. It seemed to him that he saw his mother fleeing, pursued by Polydectes with a flashing sword. On, on they sped through a waste, lone land. In vain he struggled to follow them : a weight like lead was on his limbs : at every step he fell farther and farther behind, and

now the sword, heaved on high, gleams afar, a wild shriek rends the air, "Too late, too late!" and——

With a start he awoke to hear the cry, "Land ahead!" Leaping to his feet, and peering through the gloom, he could see that they were running close to a high wooded coast. Great cliffs rose sheer above them, at whose base the sea broke with a gurgling, choking sound. Now and then they surged past a headland, over the black rocks of which the waves dashed in white foam that gleamed through the darkness. At last a word of command rang out from the captain, and the vessel swung round a wooded promontory into a sheltered cove. As the sea-breeze, intercepted by the rocky height that closed the mouth of this natural harbour, died away, the tall sails flapped, then drooped, like the weary wings of some great sea-bird: the rush of water at the prow slowly subsided: the anchor was cast: its chain ran out with a prolonged rattle; and then, her long voyage over, the vessel rode at rest. "This is our destination," said the captain; "this is the Land beyond the Sunset."

Hastily slinging his wallet over his shoulder and girding on his sword, Perseus stepped into the boat to be rowed ashore. The undulations produced by the entry of the vessel into the cove had by this time subsided, and, except for those raised by the passage of the boat itself, not a ripple ruffled the dark surface of the water, not a sound broke the silence, save the measured clank of the oars in the rowlocks and the splash of their blades in the water. Soon the boat drew up beside a jutting ledge of rock at the head of the creek, and Perseus stepped ashore. To the captain, who had accompanied him in the boat, he

bade a brief farewell, and then stood for a few moments watching the boat as it disappeared in the direction of the ship. It was arranged that the *Olive Branch* (for that was the name of the vessel) was to await him for the space of forty days. After that, if he had not returned, they were to give him up for lost and set sail for home.

From the head of the creek where Perseus stood a faint semblance of a path appeared to lead steeply up the mountain-side through the forest. He at once struck into it, and soon with panting breast and aching limbs he was ascending the slope. At every step it seemed to grow steeper: the trees, unable to root themselves to its precipitous sides, became more and more rare: at the most a solitary pine or ash, clinging to the cliff with a despairing grip, afforded him occasionally a less precarious foothold, a point at which to take breath and measure, as best he could in the dim and uncertain light, his upward progress. Now, as he rose higher, he could see far away on the horizon the faint streak that spoke to him of that cheerful world of light and life which he had left behind, perhaps for ever. But the thought of his mother and her danger revived his drooping spirits and nerved his flagging limbs to fresh exertion. "Before the sun rises on another year—" the words seemed burned into his memory in letters of fire; once more he faced the cliff and struggled upwards.

At last, when it seemed to him that his strength could carry him no farther, he perceived that he had reached the mouth of a defile which appeared to strike into the very heart of the mountains. Deeper and deeper it led into the gloomy recesses of the forest, higher and higher towered the trees. The silence was

unbroken. No living creature, not a moth or a bat flitting past, appeared by sight or sound to relieve the silent horror of the scene. Foot of man had never trodden these awful solitudes since the world began. How long he strayed in that gloomy wood, he never knew. It seemed to him days and days ; but he had lost all reckoning of time, and in the darkness, the solitude, the silence, minutes passed like hours, hours like days, and days like years.

He had given up all hope of ever emerging from the wood, but, goaded by a gnawing impatience in his soul, still continued to press onward, when at last he became gradually aware that he had reached the outskirts of the forest, and that the scene was beginning to change. A stony plain had succeeded to the forest, and over this the forlorn traveller now dragged his slow and painful steps. Compared with this wilderness of rock and boulder, the forest appeared to his memory like paradise. At every few steps he stumbled and fell on the cruel stones, whose jagged edges cut him like knives ; or again he would slip into a gaping hole between great boulders, from which he had to extricate himself with difficulty and pain. The desolation seemed multiplied a thousandfold. In the forest he had at least had the companionship of the trees, but here there was not a blade of grass, not a scrap of moss, to clothe the arid nakedness of the rocks. Fatigue overpowered him : again and again he lay down on the sharp stones to sleep but not to rest. Horrid dreams beset him : dreadful shapes seemed to throng the air, peering out of the darkness with fiery eyes, gibbering and mowing at him. He started up in terror and stumbled on.

Thus it seemed to him that ages rolled over him :

he appeared to himself to be swallowed up and annihilated in the inconceivable vastness of time. The memory of his former life, of the time when he had seen the sun and conversed with human beings, occurred to him occasionally, but as something so immeasurably remote that he scarcely thought of it in connexion with himself ; it more resembled a dream, a vision of some strange state of being which he had never known and in which he could never participate. The very stones over which he still dragged his bleeding feet began to fade and melt away into the same dim distance : he scarcely felt the pang : it, too, was a part of that far-off life in which he had no part : pain itself began to grow impersonal.

Such a state of feeling could have had but one end, had he not been roused from his stupor by a sudden shock, the perception of a change that was taking place in his circumstances, and which, while it awoke and stirred him to his inmost depths, froze his soul with horror. The light, the dim, faint glimmering light, which had hitherto cast a feeble and uncertain illumination over the ground in his immediate vicinity, was fast failing : its little circle was speedily contracting : darkness, absolute and complete, was closing in on him with rapid strides. Another instant and it was on him : the last spark and glimmer had disappeared : he was enveloped in darkness that could be felt.

Then Death stood before him, and its horror took hold of him ; but with one supreme effort, one last despairing clutch at the life that was slipping from his grasp, he plunged forward into the night and lo ! the long agony of these torturing stones was over, his foot rested on the smooth rock. A spark of hope, faint as the light which had just vanished around him,

revived in his breast: he hurried on with feverish strength, scarcely heeding the darkness in the joy of at last moving freely onward. Onward—but to what? He was soon to know; for now a lurid light suddenly and silently lit up the scene and as suddenly and silently disappeared. Mercy of heaven! he was standing on the brink of an abyss; another step and he would have plunged into its yawning depths! The momentary gleam had sufficed to show that the plain had vanished: above him on every side black, frowning mountains shot up in sheer precipices to incalculable heights, while beneath him gaped depths, even a glance at which caused the brain to reel and the eyes to grow dim. He staggered back appalled. But even in his horror remembering that to stand still was death, and that safety (though the very thought of it seemed a mockery) could only be had in motion, he dragged himself on, stumbling and falling indeed, but only to stagger to his feet and hurry once more madly along. Again and yet again that weird and silent light flared up, and vanished after casting for a moment a pale and ghastly radiance over the horrors that surrounded him. Now it revealed him to himself, tottering along what seemed the very roof and topmost pinnacle of the world; above and around him emptiness; but beneath him depth upon depth descending as if he were looking down upon the world through the void of space from some distant star. Again he found himself clinging to a hair-breadth ledge that hung upon the face of a sheer precipice between a measureless height above and a bottomless abyss below. Then the merciful darkness would close in and hide the scene.

It was after such a moment, while his head still

swam, and his whole frame seemed dissolving in deadly sickness, that a sound, the first save those of his own footsteps that he had heard for long, struck on his ear. He halted and listened with strained attention. Again it came, the same low, muffled, far-off sound, and yet again, in measured cadence. And now a breath of air fanned his haggard face. The sea, the sea! Still clinging to the rock he began to advance rapidly but cautiously, foot behind foot. As he advanced, the sound, though still low and distant, grew nearer and more distinct: his last doubts vanished: it was indeed the sullen roar of breakers on an iron-bound coast. The air began to come in puffs, which grew more frequent till they formed a steady breeze blowing over him. Its freshness revived him as by magic. Strength returned to his tottering limbs: he felt the blood beginning to course through his veins, and to mantle once more his sunken cheeks. With this gradual resurrection of the body, came a corresponding revival both of memory and hope. The past began to disentangle itself from the dreary mists of oblivion, and the future to break through the clouds of despair, like a ray of sunshine bursting through a stormy sky.

His position was still appalling in the extreme. For again the same wan mysterious glow had shone out silently and vanished, and by its pale glamour he had seen that he was still creeping along that dizzy ledge. The rock, over which his hands groped in vain for some slight protuberance, some trifling inequality of which to lay hold, still rose smooth and perpendicular above him; still, on the other side, yawned an empty gulf into which a single slip of the foot would hurl him headlong to destruction. Far

below he had caught one flying glimpse of a wild waste of waters, whose hoarse boom came floating faintly up from the prodigious depth below. He was still edging his way along in the darkness and clinging to the rock as best he could, when in the act of putting his foot forward as usual and feeling for the ledge, while he kept the other foot firmly planted, he was horrified to find that his foot could find no resting-place, only the empty air—the ledge had come to an end. And when he groped forward with his hand, he could feel the rock no longer, rock and ledge had stopped together. What was he to do? To turn on that knife-edge was impossible: to make his way backward over it was equally out of the question. All he could do was to wait for another flash of that mysterious light: it would reveal to him his fate. So he stood, hugging the smooth wall of rock and waiting. In the cramped position in which he stood his limbs ached, numbness crept over them, he could not keep his hold much longer. At last the silent gleam flashed out again, and by its light he became aware of a rocky platform that seemed scooped out of the face of the precipice. It lay right in front of him but separated from him, alas! by a black yawning chasm. It was his only chance, another moment and he would have to let go his hold: he leaped with all his force, fell short, but in falling caught the edge of the rock, and with a great effort clambered up and fell swooning on the platform.

Scarcely had he come to himself and struggled to his feet, when the light gleamed out again, and by its transitory flash he perceived at the farther end of the rocky platform on which he stood three dark gigantic figures looming through the murky air. Their backs

were half turned to him, and they sat looking seaward, vast, silent, motionless, sphinx-like. Instantaneously it flashed on him with a thrill of awe and rapture—these were the Gorgon Sentinels, the Grey Women! His heart beat with such violence that he could scarcely breathe, but bracing himself for the great hazard he crept softly in the direction in which he had caught sight of the mysterious forms. As he did so, a blinding flash lit up the gloom: the three huge figures suddenly loomed close in front of him: the flash passed distinctly from one to another of them, and was instantly followed by the same weird, universal glow which he had so often beheld with wonder and fear. Now he saw it all—it was the EYE that had passed from the one to the other and had caused that wondrous light —the sentinels were relieving guard! Crouching down for a spring he waited, and when next the gleam came he made one mighty bound, seized in both hands the huge crystalline sphere, and, blinded though he was by its flashing radiance, sprang to the edge of the cliff and hurled it over. Down, down it dropped through the darkness like a falling star. For one moment it shed a pale glow over that starless heaven: for one moment it lit up far and wide the heaving waters of that wild homeless sea: then night spread her sable pall once more over the scene.

And now from these grim, sphinx-like figures a sullen muttering sound began to issue, like the growling of a lion before he leaps or the roll of distant thunder. Without waiting an instant, Perseus turned to search for the mouth of the cave, and immediately his eye was arrested by a solitary speck of light which he judged must be in the rock behind the sentinels. He felt his way towards it but, though he advanced

steadily, it seemed to grow no larger or nearer. On he went for a long time. The hollow moan of the sea and the hoarse thunder of the baffled sentinels had died away behind him, and still the light remained a mere speck, no larger, no brighter, no nearer. Gradually, however, it began to grow in size and brightness, and soon he perceived that he was traversing a vast cavern, the overhanging sides and lofty roof of which were almost lost in the gloom.

The light at the farther end of the cave had brightened into a ruddy glow which, as he drew nearer, he perceived to be flickering. As he advanced, his ears began to be assailed by a deafening noise, the like of which he had never heard before ; and at the same time a stifling heat began to pervade the atmosphere, which increased with every step he took onwards, till what with the heat, the glare, and the noise, he felt as if he must faint or turn back. But all of a sudden the cavern came to an end, and he stood in presence of a sight compared to which all that he had yet beheld sank into insignificance. A seething lake of liquid fire lay before him, its molten billows aglow with the most fervent heat and lashed into a thousand tortured shapes, like lost souls writhing under the tormentor's scourge. All around shot up terrific mountains, but above them all one heaven-soaring cone, that with a continuous and ear-cracking roar was spewing its fiery entrails in a prodigious column of flame into the face of the red, affronted sky.

And yonder at the foot of a beetling crag right under the cone Perseus espied three dreadful forms stretched prone on the burning marl. The long-expected moment had come at last, yonder were the Gorgons. Nerving himself for the final trial, he drew

his sword and sped up the crimson slope. The glowing lava scorched his naked feet: its fierce lustre blinded him: the stunning roar of the volcano battered his ears like the blows of a giant's hammer: its burning hail pelted him like drops of molten lead; but up he sped. And now he was under the crag; now his hand was twining in the Gorgon's snaky locks; he felt the clammy serpents coiling about his arm, he heard their horrid hiss. But his sword was up, and the next moment he held, with averted eyes, the Gorgon's head in his hand. But hark, O hark! A sound as of the crack of doom is heard, such sound as clashing suns and bursting stars shall make in the final catastrophe of the universe. He looks up, and right overhead, down from that awful cone that rises sheer above him, he sees a fiery surge, an avalanche of flame rushing with the speed of a torrent to overwhelm him. Terror-stricken, but still grasping the fatal head by its snaky hair, he turned and fled.

* * * * *

In his palace King Polydectes held high festival. It was his bridal night and in the great banquet-hall he had gathered the nobles of his kingdom to celebrate his union with the fair Danaë. The hall was worthy of the great occasion. Its enormous dimensions, baffling the eye in the vain attempt to fathom them, rivalled the most stupendous structures of Egypt or Assyria, or whatever remains to attest to a feeble and degenerate age the Titanic glories of the antique world. Long rows of massive Egyptian pillars supported vast granite arcades that rose one above the other till they were crowned by the sky, the only roof that befitted so gigantic a structure. Colossal statues in endless vista held in their uplifted arms flaring torches of

pinewood : on huge tripods of bronze were set blazing cressets that tossed aloft their fiery arms ; while in the upper arcades appeared mazy festoons of starry lamps that twinkled through the gloom.

The night was late : the queen had long retired ; but the revelry was at its height and the king still sat on his lofty throne in the centre of the vast hall. In that gay scene he alone seemed unhappy : a heavy cloud darkened his brow.

" Why is the king so sorrowful on his wedding night ? " asked of him a white-headed minister who stood near the throne.

" Nestor," replied the king, " the crisis of my fate is at hand. I feel it."

" What means my lord the king ? "

" You remember the Chaldean sage ? "

" The hoary vagabond whose eyes your Majesty caused to be put out last autumn ? I remember him, the charlatan. He deserved his fate."

" When we stretched him on the rack ", continued the king, " he cried out that I should never live to see the sun rise on another year. And to-night is the last night of the year."

" Then why need your Majesty be afraid ? " asked the minister. " In another hour the sun will be up, and your Majesty's vain fears will be dispelled."

" It may be so," said the king gloomily, " but my heart is very heavy. Death is in the air."

While he spoke, the lower part of the hall was still steeped in the red tumultuous glare of the blazing flambeaus and cressets ; but over the arches and columns of the upper galleries a pale, cold light began to steal. It was the dawn.

" Audience of the king ! " a voice rang through

the hall, a clarion voice that smote on the king's ear like a knell. He started to his feet, trembling in every limb, and clutched for support at the golden eagles that flanked the throne. In vain he tried to scream for his guards : no sound issued from his dry, parched throat. The crowd of revellers and attendants parted and down the living lane came striding Perseus. He stopped before the throne and bowed low to the king, who stood aghast and motionless.

"Your Majesty", he said, "commanded me to bring the head of the Gorgon Medusa. I obey. Behold."

Drawing from his wallet the fatal head he held it up before the king, averting his eyes as he did so. Instantaneously a death-like stillness fell on the hall. The eager hum of curiosity, the joyous sounds of revelry, the voluptuous swell of music, died away together. In all that vast assembly not a hush was heard, not a finger stirred. In one corner of the hall the king's jester had opened his mouth to utter a merry quip, but his lips remained parted and the jest unspoken. A little circle of listeners had crowded round him, smiling by anticipation ; and still as he continued silent, they retained their listening attitude with the smile unchanged on their faces. In another corner a lover had bent over his mistress to snatch a kiss, and she had stooped blushing to avoid it. And still she stooped with the roses on her cheeks, and still he hung over her with puckered lips and the lovelight in his eyes. The wine-cup flashed in many an uplifted hand, but still the hand remained uplifted and the wine untasted. Slowly the morning light crept down and down, falling strangely on the peopled but silent banquet-hall, and putting to shame with its

pale pure radiance the smoky flicker of the sputtering and expiring torches. Then suddenly a bright beam shot through the great eastern oriel and streaming down the long hall struck on the king where he still stood rooted to the throne. It played softly over his grey hair, turning by its heavenly alchemy the silver streaks to gold ; and it lit up—O ghastly spectacle—the livid agony of his drawn and distorted features. The sun had risen, but he knew it not. For he and all his lords and ladies were turned to stone.

II

SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY AND HIS FRIENDS

I

A VISIT TO COVERLEY HALL

Having undertaken to edit the essays in which Sir Roger de Coverley plays a leading part, I naturally formed a wish to visit the old knight's pleasant seat in Worcestershire, where the Spectator passed the month of July with him in rural retirement more than two hundred years ago. I was the more desirous of doing so, because my researches into the history of the Spectator Club had led me to believe, that on the dissolution of the club many of the papers relating to it had been sent for safe-keeping to Captain Sentry, Sir Roger's heir, and that some of them at least were still preserved in the muniment room at Coverley Hall. Accordingly I wrote to inquire of the present owner of the Hall, and received from him a very courteous letter in reply. He informed me that he had in his possession a considerable number of papers concerning the club, that he had never himself examined them with attention, but that I should be free to do so and to publish anything of interest I might find in them, if I would pay him a visit and examine the documents on the spot, as he valued them too highly to trust them to the hazards of the post. He only stipulated, that I should not make his name public, nor drop any hint as to the part of Worcestershire in which Coverley is situated; for he leads, as he told me, a very retired

life on his ancestral estate, and he fears that, were the Hall better known, the fame of Sir Roger might attract many visitors, whom he could not admit without inconvenience, nor refuse admittance without discourtesy.[1]

Needless to say I gladly accepted his kind invitation and willingly gave the required pledge of secrecy. My wish was to visit the old Hall in summer, that I might see it as the Spectator himself saw it in those bright July days of 1711; but legal business (for like a well-known member of the Spectator Club I am a Templar) detained me in town last year all through the summer, and it was not until late in the autumn that I was able to go down into Worcestershire. Yet the delay had its compensation, for the autumn was one of unusual beauty. Never, perhaps, within the memory of men now living did summer fade so slowly and, as it were, so reluctantly through such exquisite gradations of mellow sunshine and glorious colouring into the greyness and sadness of winter. In that gorgeous sunset of the year I journeyed down to Worcestershire. After being long immured in the smoke and grime of London, it was a pure joy to me to drink in the green landscape, with its fields and meadows, its winding rivers fringed by pale willows, its old manors embosomed in trees, its peaceful villages nestling round the churches with their

[1] Well-informed readers need hardly be reminded that the name of Coverley village and Hall was changed in the later years of the eighteenth century, and no longer appears on modern maps. An old map of Arrowsmith's is, I believe, the last which marks the place under the name of Cuverly (*sic*). The circumstances under which the change of name took place were remarkable and peculiar. They are fully related in the *Annual Register*, and more concisely in an excellent article in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, to which, for obvious reasons, I am precluded from referring more particularly. Some trifling errors of detail crept into the original article, but these, I am glad to observe, have been corrected in the second edition of the *Dictionary*.

grey time-worn spires or ivied towers, as they floated silently, like a dream of heaven, past the window at which I sat. Over all rested, like a benediction, the blue sky flecked with white clouds of a lovely October day.

But mindful of my promise I will say no more of my journey, and will give no clue that could lead to the identification of the Hall. I will only say, that I have visited all Sir Roger's old haunts and seen them with my own eyes. I have walked at sunset in the long avenue of elms and heard the rooks cawing overhead, and at a later hour I have watched from the same spot the moon rising behind the ivy-clad ruins of the abbey and silvering the whole scene with her gentle beams. I have sat in Sir Roger's pew in the old village church—a square high-backed pew of black oak just under the pulpit—and have inspected the monuments of the Coverley family, which break the severe simplicity of the walls, from the uncouth effigy of the Crusader with his upturned face, clasped sword, and crossed legs, down to the marble tablets of generals and admirals, of deans and prebends, in the reigns of Charles the Second and James the Second.

I have paced the long gallery where the family portraits hang. They hang just as the Spectator describes them, but naturally not a few have been added since his time; for though the name of Coverley became extinct with Sir Roger, the family has continued unbroken to this day, and, without rising to posts of the highest distinction, has served its king and country in peace and war, on sea and land, with credit to itself and advantage to the public. Even among the portraits which the Spectator must

have seen, I noted not a few worthy of remark, which he passed over in silence. For instance, there is a portrait by Vandyke of a dark handsome man in a shining cuirass and great plumed hat, which throws half his face into deep shadow. He bore the king's commission and fell at the battle of Naseby. Another of the family in the same century rose to be Admiral of the White under the sailor king, James the Second. There is a portrait of him in his admiral's dress by Kneller. The face is rubicund, bronzed and weather-beaten ; his right hand rests on the hilt of his sword, the left sleeve is empty and pinned to his breast, which is covered with orders. The tradition at Coverley is that he lost his arm at the battle of La Hogue, his ship being one of those that pressed hardest on the French flagship, the *Royal Sun*, when that gallant ship, alone and surrounded by enemies, fell sullenly back, the fleur-de-lys still flaunting proudly at the mast-head, all her portholes sputtering fire, and all her scuppers spouting blood, till she was lost to her pursuers in the darkness. Next to the portrait of the admiral hangs the picture of a grave divine in cassock and flowing wig, seated in a pensive attitude with a great book open before him, and the spire of Coverley church appearing over very green trees and under a very blue sky in the background. He was a younger son, and held the family living of Coverley for many years. They say he was a learned man, a Fellow of his college at one of the Universities (I forget which), and very deep in Hebrew and the mathematics. In later life he devoted much of his ample leisure—for the parish duties of Coverley in those days were not very onerous—to calculating the number of the Beast in Revelation ; he even meditated a treatise on the

subject, which no doubt would have done him great honour, had he lived to publish it, but unfortunately he died before he had completed his calculations. Among these grave and gallant men there are portraits of fair ladies. I noticed one in particular of a blooming maid-of-honour, who danced with Charles the Second at the first ball which the Merry Monarch gave at Whitehall after his restoration.

But of all the portraits in the gallery, the gem, in my eyes, is that of dear Sir Roger himself. I came on it suddenly, and without a hint of whom it represented. For I had asked of the kind owner of the Hall, that I might walk by myself for a little in the long gallery and give myself up, without interruption, to the meditations which the place was fitted to evoke. I was pacing up and down in a fit of musing. It was near sunset, and the light was failing; but suddenly the departing luminary broke through a bank of clouds in the west, and his long level beams, shooting through a lofty oriel, fell full on a portrait which at once riveted my attention. I could not mistake it. The tall, slender, graceful figure—the features of almost feminine delicacy—the frank, honest blue eyes—the pleasant smile—the air of old-world courtesy—all tinged, and, as it were, fused into tenderness by something child-like and appealing, almost pathetic—it was Sir Roger himself. He is dressed in hunting costume, with his dogs about him and a rather florid landscape in the background. The portrait is youthful; there is a doubt whether it is by Lely or Kneller. I am no great judge of pictures, but it seemed to me to be in the best manner of Lely.

I have slept in the haunted chamber which was

shut up when Sir Roger took possession of the Hall, and which he caused to be exorcized by his chaplain. To judge by experience, the exorcism was effectual; for though I lay long awake, I saw nothing more ghostly than the dance of shadows cast by the firelight on the ceiling (the evening being damp and chilly they had lighted a bright fire on the hearth), and heard nothing more blood-curdling than the tick of a death-watch behind the black wainscot, the croaking of frogs in the lily-lake under my window, and the hooting of owls in the elms. With these sounds in my ears I fell fast asleep, and slept as sweetly as ever I did in my life, till a sunbeam stealing through a chink in the shutters woke me, and I sat up wondering where I was.

Before I quit the Hall I will only add, that sitting in the great oriel, where the arms of the Coverleys are blazoned on the panes, I chanced to take up an old volume that was lying on the window seat. What was my joy to find it to be Baker's *Chronicle*, the very copy that Sir Roger was wont to peruse, sitting in his high armchair by the great fireplace of the Hall after a hard day's hunting! I almost thought I could recognize the old knight's thumb-marks on some of the yellow dog-eared leaves. I fancy he must have nodded over some of these same pages and wakened with a start, when the ponderous volume fell with a crash to the floor.

Then, too, I have seen the cottage of Moll White, the witch. Her memory survives in the village, and anybody can point out her former abode. It is one of a row of whitewashed cottages, with high thatched roofs, which overlook the common, a long straggling green bounded by tall elms and enclosing in its midst

a pool, where children paddle, ducks swim, and on hot summer days the cows stand in the water with the flies buzzing about their heads. Beyond and above the elms, at the far end of the common, appears a line of low hills, which, when I saw them, showed blue and faint through the gathering mists of an autumn evening. Moll's cottage is well kept, and except for a tabby cat, which sat purring on the doorstep and rubbed itself affectionately against my legs, there was nothing about it to suggest that it had ever been the home of a witch. There were pots of flowers in the windows, creepers growing over the porch, and a linnet singing merrily in a cage above the door.[1]

The last of the scenes associated with Sir Roger which I visited in the neighbourhood was the Saracen's Head. It is a little wayside inn standing on the brow of a hill, where the road dips down rather steeply into a valley. Before turning to examine the famous signboard I stood for a moment to contemplate the prospect from the height; for the sun was setting behind the line of blue hills I have spoken of, and his last rays spread a soft radiant glory over the woods in

[1] I have described as I saw it what is certainly now shown as Moll White's cottage. But in my capacity of editor I am bound to point out that neither the style nor the situation of the cottage answers well to the Spectator's description of it as a "hovel, which stood in a solitary corner under the side of the wood". Perhaps the cottage has been rebuilt and improved since Moll's day, and others may have grown up about it. Or can it be that the identification is an arbitrary one, devised perhaps by some ingenious owner of the cottage for the sake of turning a dishonest penny? Now that I think of it, I did slip a small silver coin into the hand of the smiling old dame who let me peep in at her kitchen, and I daresay others have done so before me. I am sorry to cast any doubt on the accuracy of a picturesque tradition, and nothing but a strict regard for truth could induce me to do so. But throughout these my researches it has been my constant aim to weigh every statement, and to set down none for which there is not either conclusive evidence or at all events a high degree of probability. I could never consent, like some historians, to embellish a plain narrative of facts with a varnish of fiction, or to tickle the imagination of my readers at the expense of their understanding.

the valley, some of them already stripped and bare, others still wrapt in a gorgeous pall of autumnal red and gold. Through their gaps I could catch glimpses of a winding river, its surface here darkened by the evening shadows, there gleaming like fire with reflections of the celestial glory. The signboard dangles from an iron stanchion above the door of the inn. The head of the Saracen, which had lately received a fresh coat of paint, is certainly very ferocious, but under the long moustachios and whiskers I fancied I could still trace a faint, a ridiculous resemblance to the kindly features of Sir Roger.

That was the end of my visit to Coverley. Next day I returned to London and resumed my usual duties. I have seldom enjoyed anything so much as this excursion into Worcestershire, and I shall always treasure the memory of it. Curiously enough, though it happened so lately, there is something far away about it in my mind, as if it had taken place many years instead of only a few months ago. Indeed, writing as I now do in the heart of London, with the rumble of its ceaseless traffic in my ears, the thought of the quiet old Hall, the tall elms, the cawing rooks, the village church, and the cottages on the green in the evening twilight, comes back on me like a beautiful dream rather than the recollection of a waking reality.

Along with the papers relating to the Spectator Club, which are preserved at Coverley Hall, there is a small but interesting collection of relics. Among them I noted in particular Sir Roger's walking-stick and favourite armchair; the sword which Captain Sentry used at the battle of Steenkirk, and which he wore when he escorted Sir Roger to the theatre; also a hat with two bullet-holes through the crown,

which is traditionally said (for I could find no written record on the subject) to have been worn by the captain on the same hard-fought day in Flanders, when he charged with his regiment on a French battery. Then there is a collection of pipes smoked by members of the club, together with a number of tobacco-stoppers, some of which are supposed (though again I could find no good evidence in support of the tradition) to have been made by Will Wimble. But perhaps the most interesting relic of all is the original letter in which Sir Roger's butler announced his old master's death to the Spectator. The paper is somewhat yellow and the ink faded with time, but the handwriting is still perfectly legible, except in a few places where it has been accidentally blurred, perhaps by the tears of the writer, or by those which Sir Andrew Freeport shed when he read the letter aloud to the club. In my quality of editor I thought it my duty to collate the letter carefully with the copy of it published in the *Spectator*, and I can vouch for the accuracy of the copy, except for a few trivial points of spelling and punctuation, which I have not thought it worth while to set right. The only other relic I need mention is a phial, containing a dingy-looking liquid and labelled " The Widow Trueby's Water ". I had the curiosity to taste this celebrated specific for the gravel, but over the results of the experiment I prefer to draw a veil.

The papers relating to the Spectator Club, which I found at Coverley, consist for the most part simply of the minutes of the meetings. These seem to have been regularly kept, and though there are several gaps in them, notably in the summer of 1711, when the Spectator himself was absent in Worcestershire, it

might almost be possible to construct from them a continuous history of the club. I shall not attempt anything so ambitious; indeed the shortness of my stay at Coverley forbade me to collect materials sufficient for such an undertaking. But besides the minutes I was fortunate enough to discover several papers of notes and jottings, some of which have actually been worked up into finished essays in the *Spectator*. Others apparently refer to essays which were planned but never completed; and amongst these there is one which I have thought it worth while to publish, not for the sake of the literary merit of the piece, which is insignificant, but because it sheds new light on the private life of a prominent member of the club, Mr. William Honeycomb. The paper appears to be a rough unfinished sketch for a paper in the *Spectator*; but it is impossible to speak with confidence on the subject, as the manuscript begins and ends abruptly and bears neither date nor signature. The handwriting is certainly not Addison's, and the style is quite unlike his, being entirely destitute of those literary graces and delicate strokes of humour which enliven the productions of that elegant writer. It is rather in the manner of Budgell at his best or of Steele at his worst. The only value of the piece, so far as it has any, is a certain plain straightforward way of telling the facts, which carries the impress of truth and verisimilitude on the face of it to every unprejudiced mind. I venture to believe, that readers who are interested in the history of the club will be willing to overlook the baldness of the style for the sake of the genuine biographical interest of the matter. The many friends of the club have always mourned the sad fate of Mr. William Honeycomb, who was cut off

by an untimely marriage, while he was still in the full bloom of a very prolonged youth. The paper which I have been so happy as to unearth, sheds perhaps a glimmer of light on his mysterious disappearance from that fashionable world of which he was so long a shining ornament. At all events, it illustrates the last phase of his life, when he had bidden farewell to the gaieties of the metropolis and devoted himself, in the seclusion of the country, to the cultivation of cabbages and the domestic virtues. It is my intention hereafter to publish the piece in facsimile with a full apparatus of conjectural emendations, or corruptions, as the case may be, and a commentary in which I will explain everything that is perfectly obvious and will leave all that is dark in a decent obscurity. In this way I do not doubt that I shall win for myself a place among the foremost scholars of the age, and be hailed as a prodigy of learning, a sort of second Scaliger or Bentley, a new star just risen above the literary horizon of Europe. But as I foresee, that some time must elapse before I can fulfil these astronomical predictions by completing what a learned lady once called my *magnus opus*, I am resolved not to keep the public trembling on the tiptoe of suspense, but to oblige them by publishing the manuscript at once, just as it came into my hands, unadorned by any of those brilliant conjectural emendations on which I build all my hopes of posthumous renown. I have merely reduced the somewhat eccentric orthography of the essay to our modern standard, and relieved it of the superfluity of capitals and italics (indicated by underscoring in the manuscript), which, however they may have been deemed ornamental in the days of Queen Anne, are rejected by the taste of the more

polite age in which it is our happiness to live under good King George the Fifth. Without further preface or apology I subjoin a copy of the manuscript :

" But the club was fast breaking up. The death of Sir Roger de Coverley was soon followed by another disaster of almost equal magnitude, the marriage of Will Honeycomb. It is sad to think that the glass of fashion, the gay dog, the agreeable rattle, the faded beau, the battered rake, who had been eight and forty any time these twelve years past, should retire from the scene of his triumphs a blushing bridegroom, arm in arm with a blowzy milkmaid, while the bells of the village church rang a joyous peal. The circumstances attending this melancholy affair have never been fully cleared up ; indeed we know nothing about them except the little we can glean from Will's own account, which is naturally coloured in rosy tints and flavoured with some rather faint reminiscences of love's young dream. But for my part I cannot help suspecting that a horsewhip, brandished by a stout bucolic arm, had some share in leading Mr. Honeycomb like a lamb to the altar. Be that as it may, we leave poor Will in the country, dejectedly strolling about his paternal acres and contemplating his turnip-fields with lack-lustre eyes, while his mind wanders far away to the Mall, and St. James's Park, and Covent Garden, and he thinks with a sigh of the happy days when he strutted and swaggered about these haunts of fashion, his sword at his side and his hat cocked at the most rakish angle, ogling the frail beauties, glaring defiance at the men, and bowing to the greatest toasts in their coaches, whether he had ever seen them before or not. And those early winter mornings, too, when all sober

people were abed, and the sky was just beginning to purple behind the tall gables of the houses, how he used to lurk with other young bloods in an alley and hear the distant watchman droning out the hour, and then, peeping round the corner, to see him coming down the dark street with his lantern, to bounce out, knock him down, and hold his head, spluttering and swearing, under the refreshing water of the matutinal pump! And then that fat pursy cit in Cheapside, how he skipped and capered when they formed a ring round him and pinked him behind with their toasting-forks! To see him spinning round and round like a teetotum, and to hear him squealing like a stuck pig! Ha! ha! ha! ha! The tears ran down the old beau's withered cheeks at the thought of it. Ah! that was something like life, different from those damned turnip-tops! He kicked viciously at a stone in the path, and having squirred it away among the turnips he felt a little relieved, and resumed his agreeable meditations.

"But the smile that had begun to dawn on his face died out, and a shadow crossed his brow, as he thought of that other early winter morning in the fields behind Montague House—how dark it was and how cold!—he shivered yet at the memory of it—and the flaring torches—and the measured ground—and the flash of swords—and that limp figure borne away by staggering men through the darkness—— No, no, it was better not to think of it. But how delightful it was in winter evenings, when the candles were lit in the theatre, and the music struck up, and the curtain was about to rise on Mrs. Bracegirdle or Signor Nicolini and the lion! How pleasant, too, on summer evenings to be rowed up the Thames to Spring Garden, with the

plash of oars and the ripple of the current at the bow, while snatches of song and the sound of merry voices came wafted across the water, and the whole broad bosom of the river glowed and shimmered in the warm rays of the setting sun! And then, when the last quavers of the singers in the garden had died away, and the lamps were out, and the walks deserted, to drop down the river in the moonshine, to see the lights of London twinkling through the gloom on either bank, and the great Abbey towers standing out black against the lingering glow in the western sky!

"The very sight and sound of the streets, with the throng of foot-passengers, the stream of coaches, and the forest of gaudy signboards shining in the sun and creaking in the wind—it warmed the cockles of his heart to think of them all. And how cheerful in the afternoons to lounge in at Will's or Button's and discuss the latest news of the court or the war over a pot of steaming coffee with that arch-Whig, Dicky Steele, or that solemn prig, Joey Addison, who knew a good glass of wine, by Gad, and could take off his bottle like a man for all his smug pragmatical airs. And then, just as they were growing warm over the doings in Flanders and the cursed delays of the Allies, to be suddenly called to the door by the excited coffee-man shouting, 'Here he comes! Here he comes!' And to rush to the door and to see the Queen's messenger from Dover, spent with hard riding and all bespattered with mud, spurring through the streets to St. James's, with the people running after him to get the first news! And to stand in the crowd outside the palace while they read the despatches—and to see the window flung open and the placard hung out:

ANOTHER GREAT VICTORY IN THE LOW COUNTRIES

and then the huzzas, and the hats up in the air, and the three-times three and one cheer more, and the bonfires, and the illuminations, and the Tower guns booming out over all, and—— But from these dreams of vanished bliss the old beau was suddenly recalled to the stern realities of life by a shrill voice calling out, 'William! William!' It was Mrs. Honeycomb."

Here the manuscript breaks off abruptly. It is obviously unfinished, for the writer must certainly have meant to tell us what Mrs. Honeycomb had to say to Mr. Honeycomb, together with the outburst of profanity, or rather of tenderness, with which the fond husband met this touching appeal from the wife of his bosom. Perhaps a further search among the papers of the club may yet enable me to supply the lacuna. Meantime I will only add a few words about another small discovery of a different kind, which I was so fortunate as to make in the course of my laborious researches. It appears highly probable, if not quite certain, that during the period when he was publishing his celebrated papers the Spectator occupied chambers in Staple Inn. So far as I am aware—I write subject to correction—no one in modern years had even guessed at this. The way in which I came to ascertain it, was what, humanly speaking, you might call an accident.

It was one of the hottest afternoons of July in the very hot summer three years ago. I had been stifled with the heat and stunned with the noise of the streets, and had stepped into St. James's Park in search of a

little coolness and shade. After strolling about under the trees and admiring the gay flower-beds, then in the full pomp of their mid-summer beauty, I sat down on a chair in the shade, and amused myself by watching the swans, with their arched necks, ruffled plumage, and swelling breasts, as they slowly sailed among the water-lilies. The heat made me drowsy, and perhaps I closed my eyes for a minute or two, I cannot say, but certainly when I looked about me again, the park seemed unusually still and deserted for a summer afternoon. Not a living soul was in sight. Just then I heard a sound of voices and laughter approaching, and looking in the direction from which it proceeded I saw coming along the path toward me two figures which at once attracted and riveted my attention. At first I thought they must be maskers, so rich and varied were the colours of their costume, and so quaint its cut. They wore knee-breeches and shoes with shining buckles ; under their broad cocked hats long curled wigs hung down to their shoulders, and they had swords at their sides. One of them was an old man, tall and slender, who carried himself with a certain courtly grace as he turned and stooped slightly towards his companion in lively conversation. He wore a suit of dark purple velvet with gold buttons. The other, a shorter, stouter man, was clad in a suit of bright cherry-colour silk with a profusion of galloons, lace, ribbons, and frills ; and as he raised his hand, with a silver snuff-box in it, the sunbeams struck sparkles of fire from the jewelled rings on his fingers. He strutted with so jaunty an air that at first I took him for a young man ; but as he drew near, I could see crow's-feet about his eyes, and I fancied I could detect wrinkles under what looked like rouge on his

cheeks. They came on, laughing and talking, now in sunshine and now in shadow, till they were close up to me. Instinctively, as they passed, I stood up and raised my hat. The old gentleman, who was next me on the path, turned towards me with a pleasant smile, and as he pulled off his hat with an air of old-fashioned politeness, the sun shone full on his face, and I knew at once that it was Sir Roger de Coverley. I guessed that his companion was Will Honeycomb, and my curiosity being aroused I followed them at a little distance. They seemed to be concerting a scheme for surprising somebody, which afforded them amusement; for I heard Sir Roger say, as he pulled his watch out of his fob, "Just three o'clock. We are sure to catch him at it, if we go at once." "To be sure," replied Will Honeycomb, "he always speculates at this hour. He'll addle his brains over those cursed books. It's a Christian duty to go and rout him from them." "Well," said Sir Roger, "we'll call a coach in the Mall and go straight to him."

By this time they were come to the gate of the park, and Sir Roger hailed a hackney coach and gave the coachman a direction, which I could not hear; for he was a little way off and had his back to me. I called another coach, and bade the coachman follow the other two gentlemen closely. "The gentleman in violet and the one in rose?" he asked. I nodded, and away we drove, jolting and rattling over the paving-stones. It never struck me before, how very badly the streets of London were laid. The cobbles were such, that at every jolt I thought all the bones of my body would come out of joint. And the streets had a strange and novel appearance. Like the park they were unusually quiet, and the few passengers I

saw were dressed so oddly, the women in great hooped petticoats and bright hoods, with black patches on their faces, and the men in cocked hats, bag-wigs, knee-breeches, and coats of all the colours in the rainbow, with long rapiers dangling at their sides. Then I was surprised at the number of old black-timbered houses, which somehow I had never noticed before, though they stood out boldly enough with their tall gables projecting over the street, their wooden galleries, their casement windows with little diamond-shaped panes of glass, and their gay signboards flaunting in the sun.

I was still wondering at it all when the coach suddenly drew up, and putting my head out of the window I saw that we were in Holborn, just opposite to Staple Inn. Sir Roger and Will Honeycomb were already on the pavement. They had dismissed their coach and were turning into the Inn. I dismissed my coach also and followed. They passed under the archway with its massive doors, and entered a little cobbled court shaded by tall plane trees. There they sat down on a bench under a tree, seemingly to concert their plans for the intended surprise. I hung back in the shadow of the archway, where I could watch them without being observed. As they sat there chatting in the dappled shade, a fountain plashed hard by with a drowsy murmur, doves were cooing and fluttering, and on the far side of the court, under the thick foliage of the planes, I could see the Hall, its black old walls half mantled in vines and creepers, the sunlight shining softly through the crimson and blue and purple panes of its great oriel.

They were not long of coming to a decision, for Sir Roger soon rose briskly from the bench and led

the way across the court to a vaulted passage beside the Hall. I followed them, still unnoticed, and passing under the vault emerged on a second court with a small garden, a stretch of greensward, and gay flower-beds, all sleeping peacefully in the heat of the summer afternoon. A flight of stone steps, just opposite us, led up to a terrace overlooking the garden, but instead of ascending them Sir Roger turned sharply to the left, and entering a low doorway mounted a steep wooden staircase with a heavy balustrade of black oak. He led the way on tiptoe, looking back now and then with a smile and a finger on his lip, as if to enjoin silence on his companion. Mr. Honeycomb was by no means so careful, for he coughed and hemmed distinctly twice or thrice, and his sword clattered on the treads of the steps. I noticed, too, that the jaunty air with which he walked on the flat quite deserted him in climbing the staircase ; he puffed and wheezed, and, if I am not mistaken, I heard him swear at " those damned steps " under his breath.

On the first landing there were several doors, all of them, like the balustrade, made of massive black oak. Sir Roger turned to the right, and tapped lightly at one of them. A voice from within answered, in what seemed a peevish tone, " Come in ! " so he pushed the door open and entered, followed by Will Honeycomb. Then I heard him say in his high quavering voice, " Still speculating, my dear philosopher ? We've come to carry you off to Squire's to drink a dish of coffee with us." " Come along, old cock," I could hear Will Honeycomb adding in his gruffer voice, " the Dutch mail is just come in, and they say there's great news from Flanders. You haven't

finished the paper for to-morrow, you say? Curse it, give it to Dicky to finish; he'll scribble it off fast enough, I warrant you. Come along." They had left the door ajar behind them, so I peeped in and got a clear view of the apartment without being perceived, for they all had their backs to me. It was a low but fairly spacious room, wainscoted with some dark wood, perhaps walnut. On the far side was a huge fireplace with a great mantelpiece of carved stone over it. To the left a single window, in a deep embrasure, let in a stream of dusty sunshine, which fell on a writing-table drawn up close to the window. At the table was seated a man plainly dressed in drab with his back to me. He had been writing, for he had just pushed a sheet of paper from him, and I could see that the ink on it was still wet. Sir Roger was standing behind him, with one hand lightly laid on the writer's shoulder, looking down at him and smiling. The writer had turned half round toward his interlocutors, and from the expression of his face, and the way in which he drummed on the table with his fingers, I judged that he was somewhat impatient of the interruption. At last, as if about to remonstrate with the intruders, he turned full round on them, and, by the broad face, the snub nose, the square jowls, and the settled gravity of his countenance I knew that he could be no other than the Spectator. I was so overjoyed at having tracked him to his den at last, and found him in the very heat of composition, that I could restrain myself no longer, but tapped on the door to announce my presence and introduce myself to their society. But they seemed not to hear me, for they continued their conversation, or, to speak more correctly, Sir Roger and Will Honeycomb continued

to talk, while the Spectator sat silent with an air of rather sullen resignation. So I rapped louder, but still they paid no heed. And now the room began to grow dim, and their figures to fade, and their voices to sound very far off. I rubbed my eyes to clear my vision, and when I opened them I found myself again on the chair in St. James's Park. The swans were still swimming lazily among the water-lilies, but the sun was lower in the sky, and the shadows of the trees fell longer across the grass. The park-keeper was tapping me on the shoulder and saying, "A penny for the chair, if you please. You have had a long nap, sir."

I started up, and having paid my penny quitted the park and hurried back to Staple Inn. The streets, as I passed through them, had resumed the usual aspect of bustle and tumult, which they present on a July afternoon towards the end of the London season. I could see none of the quaint black-timbered houses which had figured so prominently on my recent ride through the city; the excruciating cobbles had disappeared, and the tide of traffic rolled smoothly over the asphalt pavement. I began to think that I must have been dreaming, and that I should find Staple Inn to have vanished like the rest of my vision. But on that point I was soon reassured. For there it was in its old place, just as I had seen it, with its ancient timbered gables overlooking the hurry, and seemingly deaf to the uproar, of Holborn. I again passed under the archway and entered the first court. Yes, there was the very bench under the plane which had been so lately occupied by Sir Roger and Will Honeycomb. There, across the court, was still the old Hall with its vines and creepers, and the sunlight

streaming through the painted glass of its windows. Again I passed through the vaulted passage beside the Hall, and again I found myself in the garden court, with its grass and flower-beds, its terrace and stone steps, all sleeping as before in the drowsy heat of the summer afternoon. But the staircase with the balustrade of black oak was gone, and though I searched for it carefully then and since, I have never been able to find it from that day to this. Yet I know it must be there, for I saw it, and I shall find it one day, and see Sir Roger again, and Will Honeycomb, and the Spectator there—there or somewhere in the land of dreams.

II

THE POLITICAL ORACLE [1]

At the last meeting but one of the club the conversation fell, as it generally does sooner or later, on the war and the best means of bringing it to a successful conclusion. The views expressed were many and very diverse. Sir Andrew Freeport, who is our great authority on all questions of commerce and finance, laid it down as a maxim that the nation with the longest purse is sure to win in the end. "English gold", says he, "will do more in the long run than English lead and steel to bring France to her knees." From this view Captain Sentry altogether dissented. "Don't tell me, sir," he said, "that the war will be decided by your traders and shopkeepers and stock-

[1] On a second visit to Coverley Hall I was able, with the kind permission of my host, to make a fresh search in the archives of the Spectator Club. Among the manuscripts which the editor of the *Spectator* had either rejected or perhaps kept by him on the chance of their serving as stop-gaps when he had nothing better to offer for the entertainment of the day, I found several that seemed to me, in spite of a lack of literary polish, to possess a certain historical or antiquarian interest as illustrative of English life in the days of Queen Anne. Among them I selected six for publication, and now submit them to the judgement of the reader. They are all unsigned, but the handwriting agrees closely with that of the fragment on Will Honeycomb in the country, which I discovered on my first visit to the Hall. Hence I conclude that all seven pieces were written by the same hand. In one of them ("Sir Roger de Coverley in Cambridge") the author plainly declares himself to be an Oxford man, but otherwise he gives no clue to his identity. Apart from a few small changes, which I have made in order to accommodate the spelling to our modern standard, I reproduce the papers exactly as they came into my hands, without corrections or alterations of any kind.—J. G. F.

jobbers. Her Majesty's army and Her Majesty's navy will beat the French on land and sea, and nothing else in the world will do it, you may take my word for it." He concluded with some disparaging remarks on the militia, of which he seemed to entertain a very low opinion.

Sir Roger de Coverley, while he spoke in very handsome terms of gentlemen of the army and navy, would have it that the real strength of England lies in the country gentlemen, and he did not scruple to attribute the slow progress of the war to the lax way in which the Game Act was administered in some counties which he could name. Being invited to explain how connivance at poaching could possibly retard the victory of our arms, he opened to us his mind more at large. "Why," says he, "it is in this way. Everybody knows that our English cavalrymen are the best in the world because they have learned to ride in the hunting-field; but if you allow foxes to be shot and trapped and massacred in such-like unnatural ways by farmers and fellows without a licence, how can you expect our men to keep their seats in the saddle when they meet the French? The thing is clean impossible."

The clergyman, who chanced to be present that evening, told us he looked for victory only to the effectual fervent prayers of the Church of England, to the total exclusion of papists and dissenters, whose intercessions he would positively discourage and even forbid as calculated rather to hinder than help any measure they might advocate by exciting the wrath and indignation of the Deity. He ascribed the glorious victories of Blenheim and Ramillies and Malplaquet, under Providence, to the working of the

Five Mile Act, which, by laying an embargo on the nefarious activity of dissenting preachers, had done more to further true religion and Christian charity than anything else in our lifetime.

At each and all of these opinions Will Honeycomb smiled with an air of superior wisdom, which impressed us with a sense of his deep political sagacity and insight. Being pressed to unfold his views for our benefit, he took a pinch of snuff and gave it for his opinion that the war was made by a woman, and that by a woman it would be ended. "Whenever men fight," says he, "you may lay your life there is a woman at the bottom of it. It was Madame What-do-ye-call-her that egged on the King of France to make all this pother by acknowledging the Chevalier to be King of England on the death of his father; and she or some other fine woman will coax him into making peace for the sake of her gallant. That's how the world wags, depend upon it. Ambassadors and Generals and the rest of them may strut about and make a brave show, but they are all tethered, every one of them, to some minx's apron strings, who sets them dancing to the tune she plays. The passion that their sex has for war and its trumperies is inconceivable. A red coat does more execution on a female heart than the most elegant shape, the most shining wit, and the greatest knowledge of the town." Will spoke with some bitterness, which was natural enough if, as rumour averred, he had been jilted more than once in favour of military gentlemen, some of them on half-pay and wanting several of their limbs, which they had lost in the service of their country.

When we had all said our say and could arrive at no manner of agreement, Sir Roger surprised us with

a proposal. "Gentlemen," he said, "I fear these questions are too knotty for us. But I have a neighbour in the country, a man of very good property, who knows more about them all, I will be bound, than any other three men in England. If only the Government had listened to him, we should have conquered the enemy long ago. He thinks prodigiously, has the best hunting seat but two in the county, and rides fifteen stone. It so happens that he is now in town on legal business, and if you will allow me I will bring him to the next meeting of the club, so that you may hear him for yourselves."

Our curiosity being aroused to see and hear this political Nimrod, we begged Sir Roger to bring his friend, and the old knight readily consented to do so. At the next meeting of the club, which took place last Monday, the attendance was unusually large, for the word had gone round that Sir Roger was bringing a statesman of the first water, a mine of wisdom, and a prodigy of learning. From his description we had pictured to ourselves his friend as a man of gigantic stature and commanding presence, with lofty forehead, beetling brows, deep-set eyes, cheeks furrowed and sicklied with thought, and his whole frame gaunt and emaciated by the intensity of his application to the profoundest problems of nature and man. What, then, was our surprise, when the oracle entered the room, to see a plump, rosy, thick-set man of middle height, with cheeks like the cherry and a fair round belly, habited in the style of a farmer and followed by a bulldog with great goggle eyes, bandy legs, and formidable jowls. He at once introduced the animal to us as a dog of extraordinary sagacity. "Towzer", said he, "is a dog that has more sense than many

Christians. He will smell you a dissenter a mile off and worry a Presbyterian at sight. As I hear that London is full of these vermin, I always bring Towzer with me, when I come to town, to protect me against them."

Having surveyed the company with great attention, and satisfied himself apparently that there was none of the obnoxious vermin among us, the sagacious animal retired under the table, while his master dropped into a chair beside the fire, where he lit his pipe and smoked in silence with great gravity. The conversation now languished a little, for though we were all agog to hear the words of the oracle and hung on his lips every time he opened them, he balked us by emitting from them nothing but volumes of smoke, while he watched the rings of blue vapour curling up to the ceiling with an air of deep abstraction. This lasted for some time till we almost despaired of tapping the springs of political wisdom which we were convinced lay concealed under that calm exterior. Indeed we might have concluded that, absorbed in thought, he knew nothing of what was going on around him, if it had not been that whenever the word Whig happened to be mentioned, he gave a loud snort, which appeared to indicate that he had heard the term and attached some meaning to it, though what sentiment it excited in his mind we could not guess, for his features remained otherwise unmoved.

We might have sat thus till midnight, if Sir Andrew Freeport had not luckily or unluckily, I hardly know which, dropped some remarks on the advantages which the country derives from trade and commerce. This brought the stranger to his feet at once. He bounced

out of his chair, and taking his pipe out of his mouth and waving it about in the air, while his cherry cheeks grew purple with suppressed agitation, he said, "Trade, sir, is the curse of this country and will be the ruin of it if it is not put down in time". We were all taken aback, as the sailors say, by the suddenness and unexpected turn of the remark, and as he vouchsafed no explanation of this oracular utterance, apparently assuming that he had delivered himself of a self-evident truth and indisputable axiom, Sir Andrew Freeport ventured to ask him how he could prove it. "Prove it!" says he, turning short on the knight and glaring at him, "why, it's as plain as a pikestaff. What does trade do for us but send all our English goods out of the country and bring in all the trash of these accursed foreigners? No, sir, your traders and merchants are sucking the country dry and stuffing their pockets with ill-gotten gains. England will never be old England again till they are all hanged in a row, and the stockjobbers with them, aye, and the directors of the Bank too, for they are all a pack of scurvy, lousy scoundrels, every man jack of them."

Sir Andrew was about to protest against this sweeping denunciation of the profession to which he belongs, and no one knows how the discussion would have ended, for both parties were warm and everybody seemed about to take sides, when the door of the parlour opened and the waiter entered with supper. The sight of the plates, and especially of the glasses, diffused at once a more genial atmosphere throughout the room, and the disputants might perhaps have come to a friendly understanding if it had not been for an untoward incident. For no sooner had the

waiter advanced into the room with the supper tray, than Towzer, who had been reposing peacefully under the table, started up and growling fiercely flew at him and fastened on his leg. The poor man dropped the tray with a shriek ; there was a loud crash, and in a moment the floor was littered with broken glass and china and crimsoned with streaming wine. We all rushed at the dog, and by tugging at his tail, thumping his back, and wrenching his jaws, we persuaded him, with much ado, to unclench his teeth and retreat, snarling, under the table. The only man who viewed the scene with perfect composure and took no part in the struggle with the infuriated animal was the dog's master. When peace was at last restored, the remains of the supper and broken crockery mopped up, and the waiter's leg bandaged, the political oracle, turning to the fellow, demanded of him abruptly, " Are you a dissenter ? " " Oh no, sir ! " answered the man, " Church of England, I assure you, sir, born and bred." The oracle seemed posed for a moment, but soon recovering himself he observed, " Then some of your people must be dissenters." " Well, sir," replied the man sheepishly, " if you put it to me like that, I must own that my first wife's stepfather was a Baptist." " His first wife's stepfather was a Baptist ! " repeated the political Daniel with an air of triumph, " now you can see for yourselves, gentlemen, what a knowing dog Towzer is. Good old Towzer, come along." With that he marched out of the room, with the bulldog trotting after him ; and as the total destruction of supper, for which we were indebted to the extreme sagacity of Towzer, cast a damp over the discussion, we soon put out the candles and dispersed. I noticed that Sir Roger, who seemed a little discon-

certed by the upshot of the debate, lingered behind, and in going out slipped something into the hand of the waiter, no doubt to console him for the injury to his leg and the insult to the memory of his first wife's stepfather.

III

CAPTAIN SENTRY ON THE FRENCH

In these my papers I have had occasion more than once to mention Captain Sentry, a gentleman whom we all esteem for his worth and honour. As he is the only military member of our club, we often appeal to him on matters connected with his profession, and he gives his opinion on them with authority. But, being a man of great modesty and few words, he will never speak of his own exploits, though he served with distinction in Flanders under His late Majesty. Some days ago at the club we were discussing the recent success of the Allies, and a stranger, who chanced to be among us, whispered to me that he would draw or smoke, as he expressed it, the captain on the subject of his former feats of arms. I did not encourage him, knowing our friend's habitual taciturnity on everything that touches his own conduct in the field. However, the gentleman was confident, and addressing himself to the captain, who was smoking a pipe, he said, "These are very glorious news from the Low Countries, sir." The captain continued to smoke his pipe placidly and said nothing. "I say, sir," repeated the gentleman, raising his voice as if the captain had been deaf, "these are very glorious tidings from Flanders and must warm the heart of every honest Englishman." Still the captain

continued to smoke his pipe and said nothing. Thereupon the gentleman, winking at us as if to intimate that he would draw the old fox yet, observed, "You, sir, at least, as an old soldier, must rejoice at the drubbing we have given these cursed Mounseers." The captain still said nothing, but two red spots came and went on his cheeks, and we who were acquainted with him knew that it was a sign his temper was rising. Undeterred by these symptoms, which he probably did not notice, the stranger went on in an insinuating tone, "Well, sir, you will admit, I am sure, that one Englishman can beat three Frenchmen any day." The captain at last took his pipe out of his mouth, and breaking silence answered very coldly, "That is not my experience, sir." "At all events, sir," persisted the stranger, "when it comes to manners, we English are superior to the French, are we not?"

The captain remained silent for a few moments, and then, as if making an effort to control himself, he replied with great deliberation, "Since you press me, sir, I will give you a specimen of French manners for which I can vouch. At the battle of Steenkirk"—here we all drew our chairs closer to listen—"at the battle of Steenkirk my regiment was engaged with a regiment of French cuirassiers. I don't know how it came about—I suppose I had outridden my men—but I found myself alone in the midst of the enemy. I defended myself as well as I could, but must soon have been overpowered, if the colonel, crying out, '*A moi seul! à moi seul!*' had not ordered them to stand back and leave me to him. So they formed a sort of ring round us, and at it we went, as I may say, hammer and tongs. I can't say how long it lasted, but at last I got in a shrewd blow at him which I

thought would have done for him. But somehow my sword—and a good Toledo blade it was too—shivered on his cuirass, and I was left with the stump in my hand. I looked to be cut down by him the next instant, and composed myself to receive the stroke. But what do you think he did? He rode up to me and gave me his own sword, his own sword—I am wearing it now—and—and," here the captain hesitated and then, with a sort of gulp, he added, " and he put his arms round me and kissed me on both cheeks. Then he ordered the regiment to open out the ranks and to salute. And they all gave me the salute in form, raising their swords and crying, '*Vive l'Anglais! Vive l'Anglais!*' while I rode away. That, sir, is a specimen of French manners. The French, sir, are a noble people, a noble people. And if any man speaks ill of them in my presence, by God, sir, I'll have him out, I'll have him out!"

He rose and paced the room in great excitement, his cheeks flushed and his eyes flashing. We all gazed on him in astonishment, never having seen him so moved before, for in general he is very quiet and calm. The gentleman who had raised the storm was quite abashed, and availing himself of the diversion caused by the captain's extraordinary behaviour, he took his hat and stole away. On his departure the captain's emotion soon subsided. He resumed his seat and his pipe, and, as if ashamed of having said so much, he did not open his lips again for the rest of the evening.

IV

THE SPECTATOR IN THE COUNTRY

COVERLEY HALL, *July 25th*, 1711.

Rura mihi et rigui placeant in vallibus amnes;
Flumina amem silvasque inglorius.—VIRGIL.

THE end of my visit to Sir Roger is now approaching, and I confess that I contemplate my return to town with a degree of regret which I certainly did not expect to feel when I left London for Coverley. In truth, I fall more and more in love with the country. The soft green of fields and meadows, of trees and hedges, the flowery lanes, the winding willow-fringed streams, the prospect of far blue hills, the great expanse of sky, flecked with white summer clouds at noon or kindled into crimson and gold at sunset, the freshness and sweetness of the air, the peace and tranquillity poured like a healing balm over all—these things affect me with a pleasure which I feel deeply but am powerless to express. I begin to think of forswearing the city and retiring far from its smoke and uproar, its fever and fret, to spend the remainder of my days in some rural solitude. If ever I do so, I cannot imagine any spot that would attract me more than Coverley, and if Sir Roger would have me for a tenant, I should be content to take up my abode, with a few favourite books, in a cottage, somewhere within sight of the church steeple peeping out among the old

elms, and within the sound of its solemn bells. For to me there is something strangely fascinating in an English village church. The grey time-worn walls, with their mosses and lichens and weather-stains, the very bareness and simplicity of the whitewashed interior with its plain pews and unpretending pulpit, the silence that reigns within when you enter on a week day, the sight of the green leaves fluttering outside in the breeze, the sweet scent of the hawthorn or the hay blown in upon you through the open windows or door, make up an impression, or rather a series of impressions, well fitted to ease the troubled or jaded mind, to wear away its carking cares, to smooth out, if I may say so, its creases and rumples, in a word, to restore its composure and calm. And the charm of a village church is greatly enhanced when, as here at Coverley, it adjoins an ancient Hall, the two together carrying the mind back into the past, to England of the olden time, which, whether justly or not, in the bustle of modern life we regard with a certain fond regret. The world, we are fain to think, went very well then ; though, to be candid, I imagine that if the kindly wizard Time, who spreads enchantment over distant views, were to transport us to those vanished scenes, we might find the spell broken and ourselves disenchanted.

However that may be, the longer I stay at the Hall, the more I love its master. For there is about him a sweet simplicity, a sort of childlike frankness and innocence which wonderfully pleases me and puts me many times in mind of Our Saviour's words, " Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." I think I never met one who seemed to me to need less

preparation for death and for that communion with the spirits of the just made perfect, to which Scripture teaches us to look forward as a principal source of the happiness that awaits us in the life hereafter. Not that Sir Roger is either very wise or very witty; for in truth he is neither, unless, as I am sometimes prone to think, the greatest wisdom consists in the greatest purity of the heart, for judged by that standard I would be bold to match Sir Roger against Socrates or any sage in history.

As he has arrived at the time of life when men naturally turn their thoughts to the long past that is behind them rather than to the short and uncertain future before them, Sir Roger loves to recall the memories of his youth, and in this propensity I encourage him, for he has much to tell of stirring scenes that he witnessed in days when England was more agitated than now and had not yet attained to that settled state of internal tranquillity for which we are indebted to the prudence and vigilance of Her present Most Gracious Majesty. He remembers faintly as in a dream the dismal pageantry of the day when the remains of the usurper, who styled himself Protector, were borne, with more than regal solemnity, amid the silence of an innumerable throng, to rest with the dust of kings and princes. He recalls more distinctly and with far greater pleasure, the wild outburst of joy which greeted the return of His Majesty King Charles the Second; how the streets were strewed with flowers and hung with tapestry; how the windows and balconies were crowded with ladies; how bells rang, trumpets blared, and fountains ran wine; and how the horse and foot, with shouts and brandishing of swords, the Livery Companies with their chains of

gold and banners, and lords and nobles clad in cloth of silver and velvet, were passing for hours the place where he stood in the Strand to watch them. As a young man he witnessed the Great Plague and the Great Fire of London, and he well remembers the sad day when the roar of the Dutch guns in the Thames was heard like the rumble of thunder all over the city, the people in a dreadful suspense crowding into the streets to listen, till the sullen sound of the firing drew farther and farther off, and finally died away in the distance.

Yesterday Sir Roger was in a particularly communicative vein. The day was hot, and in the afternoon we walked out through the fields by a footpath beside a high hedge and in the dappled shade of a long row of venerable elms ; then crossing a meadow and passing through the churchyard of a little hamlet, where the grassy mounds and mossy headstones basked in the sunshine among ancient yews, we ascended the slope of a hill by a track that led through tall wheat, now turned a rich russet brown and spangled with scarlet poppies. Thus ascending we reached the brow of the hill and struck a high road which here runs for miles along the crest of the ridge, skirted on the one side by a wood and on the other hand affording wide views down the declivity and away over the flat country to some low blue hills which bound the prospect in the far distance. Just on the brow of the hill there stands a ruinous old windmill, its timbers rotting and its great sails drooping like the wings of a wounded bird. Here on a bench we sat down to rest and to enjoy the freshness of the air on the height before retracing our steps homeward. The landscape spread out before us was peaceful and pleasing. At

our feet the high road ran steeply down the slope, and where it passed out of sight we could still trace its line by the trees that fringed it on either side, rising and sinking like a green wave with the undulations of the ground. Away to the north, faintly discernible as specks on the horizon, appeared the towers of a minster, but so far off that they would have escaped me if Sir Roger had not pointed them out. In the foreground, but still at a distance of several miles, we could see the woods of Coverley, and just over the edge of the hill the spire of the little village church which we had passed before ascending the slope. On the side of the distant blue hills, beyond the woods of Coverley, my friend bade me mark what looked like a white scar ; he said it was the high road to Oxford.

Charmed, as it were, by the prospect we sat a long time, and Sir Roger chatted of other days, while I listened spellbound, till the sun, sinking in the west, stretched out the shadows on the slope of the hill and reminded us that it was time to return. So, rising reluctantly, we descended the hill and followed the high road back to Coverley. What the old knight told me, as we sat there that summer evening, will long remain imprinted on my memory, and may furnish matter for the future entertainment of my readers. But their patience, like my paper, is no doubt exhausted, and I will not tax it further to-day.

V

SIR ROGER IN CAMBRIDGE

I DO not know that I have anywhere mentioned that Sir Roger de Coverley, though he is not himself learned, has a very great—I may even say an excessive—respect for learning and learned men. I have seen him stand, hat in hand, in Fleet Street speaking deferentially to a common scribbler, a literary hack, who had just descended from his garret in Grub Street, where he earns his bread in the sweat of his brow by lampooning the most eminent characters and belauding the basest for any man who will hire his services at a shilling a sheet. If I mistake not, the fellow has stood in the pillory more than once for his scurrilous libels, and has received the tribute of public esteem for his talents in the shape of dead cats and rotten eggs, which to him are what laurels and ivy are to writers of a different stamp. Very much astonished, I can assure you, he seemed to be when the baronet bent low (the wretch is a squat, dumpy little man, and Sir Roger is tall and slender) to catch the words of wisdom that trickled and spluttered in a thick voice from his grimy, bristly lips; for this literary oracle has an impediment in his speech, appears to suffer from a chronic catarrh, and I much doubt whether he washes and shaves more than once a fortnight. He was plainly ill at ease under the old knight's attentions,

shuffled with his feet, cast furtive glances about him all the time, as if he expected to see a bailiff turning the corner of the next street to nab him for his score at the alehouse, and experienced an obvious relief when, the meeting over, he could slink back to his garret, there to resume his congenial task of blackening virtue and whitewashing vice. "A great writer, I believe," said Sir Roger, looking after him, "a great writer! though I could wish he would pay more heed to his linen. But I suppose his head is too full of learning to attend to such things."

Sir Roger himself is a man of very few books, and knows little about our modern authors. I do not believe he has so much as heard the name of Mr. Pope, who in the last few years has taught our English numbers to flow with a mellifluous cadence they never knew before. I once spoke of Milton to him, but he shook his head. "John Milton," he said, "John Milton. Yes, I have heard of the rascal. A regicide, sir, a regicide! He might thank his stars that His Gracious Majesty King Charles (God bless him!) did not bring his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. No, sir, don't talk to me about that canting crop-eared cur!" He grew so warm that I was fain to turn the conversation by hurriedly mentioning Lovelace and Cowley, who, I knew, as Cavaliers, stood high in Sir Roger's good graces. The cloud at once passed from the old knight's brow and gave place to a beaming smile. "Gentlemen of sound principles, both of them," said he, "and very good poets too, I'll be bound. No man, sir, can write good poetry who has not a proper respect for Church and King. But as for John what-do-ye-call-him, that snivelling, glum-faced son of a——" He was about to burst out again

on the sore subject of Milton, when I dexterously interposed the name of Herrick, and again the knight's passion calmed down as suddenly as it had risen. For in Sir Roger's youth Herrick's verses were at the height of the fashion; he had learned many of them by heart, and set them on the same lofty pedestal with Baker's *Chronicle*, which is the only other book I ever heard him quote with approval. I had struck the right key. He hummed to himself some of the poet's lines — I caught something about love and fleeting youth and fading roses, and saw by his eye that his thoughts had wandered far away to other days and distant scenes; perhaps he was young again, roaming the hawthorn lanes and cowslip meadows of Worcestershire on a sunshiny day in spring, or lingering in the twilight on the willow-fringed banks of Severn, to mark the red autumnal sun setting in mist beyond the Welsh mountains. When he came to himself at length, he had recovered all his usual placidity and serenity of temper; Milton and the other crop-eared curs were quite forgotten.

As his journeys to and from Worcestershire take him through Oxford, he is well acquainted with that famous city, and a warm admirer of it, though I have never been able to determine exactly whether it is the learning or the loyalty of the place that excites his admiration in the higher measure; for in his references to it he hardly seems to distinguish between these claims of the University town to public gratitude. His father attended King Charles the First when he held his court at Oxford, and Sir Roger has many stories to tell of the monarch's gracious demeanour to the scholars and learned men: how he dined with them in the college halls, and prayed with them in

the college chapels ; how, on summer afternoons, he strolled with them in the cloisters of Magdalen, or played at bowls with them in the gardens of St. John's ; and how, when he rode out of the town for the last time, before the battle of Naseby, he was attended to the gate by the Vice-Chancellor, the Heads of Houses, and the Doctors of Divinity, all in scarlet, who did homage to him and bade him God-speed before he mounted his horse. Then he leaped into the saddle, the music struck up, and the whole cavalcade was in motion. As he rode away he turned once more in the stirrups to wave a good-bye to the loyal city he was never to set eyes on again ; and the doctors in their red gowns at the gate stood gazing after him and shading their eyes with their hands, till the last of the cavalcade disappeared in a cloud of dust, and the music died away in the distance. Such are the reminiscences which Sir Roger loves to relate of Oxford. But as for the dusty libraries and the wrangling disputations of that seat of learning, he has little to say about them.

I have frequently had occasion to mention the Templar, a gentleman of some reading and still greater pretensions in polite letters, who is a member of our club, and there lays down the law on all questions of taste with a confidence which I envy, though I cannot always share. As he was bred at Cambridge he has a partiality, which I do not blame, for that University, to which he would award—in my humble opinion, very unjustly—the palm of antiquity and renown above its rival on the banks of the Isis. Accordingly, when Sir Roger alludes to the glories of Oxford, the Templar is apt to vaunt what he considers the superior glories of Cambridge, and seems

nettled if any member of the club disputes its claim to pre-eminence. As for Sir Roger, while he regards Oxford with affection, he has long looked on Cambridge with deep distrust as the breeding-place of that most pernicious varlet, Oliver Cromwell. To abate his prejudice on this head the Templar proposed, a few days ago, that Sir Roger and he should visit Cambridge together, assuring our friend that if he only saw the place he would like it as well as Oxford, or rather better; besides, knowing the knight's profound reverence for the very name of learning, he artfully held out as a bait the prospect of his making the acquaintance of a scholar, who, if we may believe the Templar, is one of the most learned and celebrated men in Europe. This had a visible effect on Sir Roger, and after a little hesitation he agreed to undertake the journey, only bargaining that the philosopher, as he calls me, should make one of the party. I readily agreed to the proposal, for, having had the misfortune (as the Templar would think it) to be bred at the sister University, I had never visited Cambridge, and felt some curiosity to see a place about which I had heard so much. So it was agreed that we should meet next morning at the Rainbow, in Holborn, from which the coach plies to Cambridge.

We met next morning, as agreed, at the Rainbow. Sir Roger was attended by his butler, armed with holster pistols for fear of highwaymen, who had been on the road about Royston three days before. I need not trouble my readers with an account of the journey. It passed off without adventure. We saw nothing of the highwaymen—at least, of the live ones—for we passed two dead ones hanging in chains on a gibbet a little way beyond Hatfield. Towards the end of the

day Sir Roger grew weary and fell asleep, but about dusk he was roused by the sound of church bells, and, putting our heads out of the window, we saw the lights of Cambridge in the distance. As we rode into the town all the bells in the steeples seemed to be jangling to welcome us; the clangour was almost deafening. The Templar told us that this was the curfew, which is still rung in Cambridge every evening, as it has been rung since the days of William the Conqueror. It was dark when we rattled into the courtyard of the Red Lion. We could see nothing but some tall gables faintly outlined against the sky and a long wooden gallery, dimly lighted by a few spluttering oil-lamps, which appeared to run round the yard.

Next morning we were up betimes, and, having broken our fast, we prepared to sally forth. The Templar addressed us with some solemnity. "Gentlemen," said he, "I shall conduct you first to my own college, the college of the Holy and Undivided Trinity. It is the greatest college in either University." At this point I was seized with a violent fit of coughing. The Templar paused, and, looking hard at me, "I hope, sir," says he, somewhat tartly, "that you do not mean to dispute that proposition?" "Not at all, sir; not at all," I stuttered between the fits; "but I am afflicted with a chronic cough, which always seizes me, I do not know why, whenever I hear the name of Trinity College, Cambridge. Many Oxford men, I believe, suffer in the same way." "Well," resumed the Templar, "as I was saying, when I was interrupted by our suffering friend, I am about to carry you to Trinity College and to make you known to the Master, Dr. B-ntl-y. He is unquestionably the greatest scholar in Christendom." Here I

was again overtaken by a fit of coughing more violent than before. At that the Templar seemed to lose patience, and, snatching up his hat, "Gentlemen," he cried, "follow me. I will lead the way." He did so, and, tripping at his heels, we descended into the courtyard and passed out into the street. I know not what devil possessed me, but no sooner were we in the street than I turned sharp to the right and had taken a few steps in that direction when the Templar ran after me and, laying his hand on my shoulder, "For God's sake, sir," says he, "don't go that way." "And why not, sir?" I asked, with some surprise. "Because, sir," says he, "that is the way to Christ's College and Sidney Sussex College." As I still looked bewildered, he clapt his mouth to my ear and whispered hoarsely, "The college of Milton and the college of Oliver Cromwell! Sir Roger would rather be blasted by lightning than put his foot inside either of them." I understood at once. We turned back and rejoined Sir Roger, who had happily noticed and overheard nothing, being occupied in his daily exercise of clearing his pipes, as he calls it, in the fresh morning air and contemplating with great satisfaction the novel scenes around him. We now saw, what the darkness of the night before had prevented us from perceiving, that the street was very narrow, and was straitened still more by the projecting gables of the houses, which seemed as if they would meet overhead. I confess I was a little disgusted to behold so many relics of the barbarous taste of Queen Elizabeth's day, with their heavy black timbers and their cramped little lattice-windows and their diamond-shaped panes of bottle-green glass. How painfully these Gothic antiquities, as I may call them, contrasted with a

few of those neat square houses of red brick which have so happily come into fashion in our own time, and particularly under the glorious reign of Her present Majesty.

From this street, which I think they call Petty Cury, we turned into a large open square. "This", said the Templar, "is the market-place." Indeed, we could see for ourselves that it was so, for it was covered with booths, where hucksters were busy selling their wares. The stalls, with their display of flowers, fruit, vegetables, and so forth, made a pretty enough show in the sunshine, for it was a fine morning. Thence we threaded our way through a labyrinth of narrow streets, or, rather, lanes, all overhung by the same unsightly protruding houses, which blocked out the sunlight and threatened to fall on our heads. At last, emerging from these alleys, we came to a great arched gateway, flanked by tall embattled towers, with many coats-of-arms blazoned on its grey, time-worn front. "This is Trinity," said the Templar, shortly. I think he was in a huff, and feared to set me off coughing again. So, without giving us time to scrutinize the scutcheons, he led us through the archway into the court. A spacious enough court it was, I am free to admit, with a great expanse of grass, a fountain playing among flower-beds in the centre, the hall with its tall oriel on the opposite side, and the chapel with its long line of buttresses on our right.

Hardly allowing us leisure to look around, the Templar led, or, rather, hurried, us across the court to a porch, where he knocked at a door. A venerable manservant opened. "Is the Master at home?" asked the Templar. "He is, sir," answered the servant, "but does he expect you?" "He does,"

replied the Templar; "I wrote to him, and have his answer." "Then come this way, sir," said the butler. He led us up a stately staircase and ushered us into the Master's study, a large, wainscoted chamber, partly lined with bookcases, and lighted by several tall windows that looked out on the court by which we had entered. The room was empty, and we had to wait a few minutes. Then we heard voices approaching, the door opened, and the Master stood before us, a tall, burly figure in cap and gown. Behind him trotted a little man of deferential manners, whom the Master introduced to us as the Vice-Master, Mr. Walker, and to whom he handed his cap. "Sir Roger," said the Master, "I am glad to make your acquaintance. On my journeys to Worcester, where my duties as prebendary take me for two months every summer, I have often passed your gates." "Then I hope, sir," interposed Sir Roger, "that the next time you come down you will do me the honour of paying a visit to the Hall." "I shall be happy to do so, sir," replied the Master, with great suavity; "I shall be very happy to do so. Sir Roger, you have a good name in the county as a staunch Churchman and a loyal subject. In these days of atheism and sedition—I leave you, sir, as a layman to apply the appropriate epithets to those pests of our time—I say, sir, in these days of sedition and atheism, it is a pleasure to make the acquaintance of a gentleman of such sound principles. I shall be happy to visit you at Coverley."

This gracious acceptance of his invitation quite won Sir Roger's heart, and he prattled like a child, the Master listening to him with a benevolent, almost fatherly smile, his massive brow unbent, and what I

thought must be the habitual sternness of his expression sensibly relaxed. It was surprising to see how these two men, apparently so different, drew to each other ; it was almost as if they had conceived a sudden and mutual affection. I have said that Sir Roger looks up to learned men with a genuine reverence ; this time he had to do with a scholar indeed, and no sham. The Master felt and accepted the homage paid from the heart to his profound learning ; he basked, as it were, in an autumnal sunshine, for time has grizzled his dark locks and furrowed his cheeks. I watched the two men with interest, for they made a picture, sitting there together in the sunshine at the window that looked out on the Great Court. But my thoughts wandered, and I hardly heeded what they said. However, from scraps of their talk I gathered that Sir Roger was telling the Master about Coverley, and relating some of his best stories about the ghosts at the Hall, and how the chaplain laid them, especially that good old ghost with the bloody hand and the clanking chains, and Moll White and her witcheries —that old, old story about the buttermilk and the broomstick—and so on, and so on.

At last the Master seemed to recollect himself, and, pulling out his watch, he started and said, " Gentlemen, I am sorry I must leave you. I had an appointment with the Regius Professor of Greek at eleven o'clock, and I see that it is now nearly half-past. I had not perceived how the time was going." " The Regius Professor of Greek ! " repeated Sir Roger, in an awe-stricken voice. " A very great scholar, I'll be bound, sir." " So-so, sir ; so-so," answered the Master, frowning slightly and pursing his lips—the smile had quite gone out of his

face by this time; "he has his limitations, sir, as I suppose we all have. I should be surprised, sir, to learn that he could distinguish between the hands of John and Isaac Tzetzes in the scholia on Lycophron. His views on the digamma in Homer are most unsound, most unsound; and would you believe it, sir—it seems incredible, but it is true—that he once wrote a copy of anapaestic verse in which he disregarded—actually disregarded—the synaphea?" "God bless my soul!" cried Sir Roger, quite shocked, "you don't say so?" "But I do, though," said the Master, "Walker, is it not so?" The Vice-Master had been gazing abstractedly out of the window, absorbed in the contemplation of two young men engaged in the last round of a single combat on the grass plot outside. Thus suddenly recalled to his duty, he turned hastily round, saying, "Certainly, Master, certainly, without question it is so. You are undoubtedly right." "You hear what the Vice-Master says, gentlemen," said the Master; "yes, yes, in his poetical afflatus Joshua forgot all about the synaphea! Ha! ha! ha! He completely forgot the synaphea!"[1] He leaned back in his chair, laughing heartily. Then he rose, saying hurriedly, "But I must be gone. Gentlemen, I wish you good day. Sir Roger, I am your very humble servant," with a deep bow. "Mr. So-and-So"

[1] "The allusion is no doubt to Joshua B-rn-es, the present learned incumbent of the Greek Chair at Cambridge, whose recent edition of Homer has made a great stir in the world of letters. If we are not misinformed, there has been more than one passage of arms between him and Dr. B-ntl-y, which may account for the asperity with which the doctor appears to treat his rival in the domain of scholarship. We hear that in private life Dr. B. ridicules the opinion of Professor B. that the *Iliad* was written by King Solomon, and that he does not stick to assert that the professor choused his wife of her money by inducing her to sink it all in his 'putid' edition of Homer under the unalterable persuasion of the poet's personal identity with the Hebrew monarch. But into these peddling disputes of the learned we do not care to descend."—(*Note to the MS., apparently not intended for publication.*—J. G. F.)

(naming the Templar), "your servant," with a bow. Then, turning to me, and barely inclining his tall figure, he added with a jerk, "Good morning, sir. Walker, my hat!" The Vice-Master handed him the cap reverentially, and, followed by his obsequious attendant, the Master stalked majestically away.

VI

SIR ROGER IN COVENT GARDEN

Sir Roger de Coverley is now in town, and he spent an evening with us at the club two days ago. But he left us before it grew late; "For", says he, "you know I am a country bird; I go early to roost." When he had gone, one of the company remarked: "I daresay Sir Roger did not always keep such early hours. They say he was a gay fellow in his youth. What is that story about him and a woman of the town?"

"Sir Roger and a woman of the town!" cried Sir Andrew Freeport hotly, "nonsense! I do not believe that he ever spoke to one in his life or would know one of the poor creatures if he saw her."

"As to the speaking," interposed Will Honeycomb, "you are wrong. I was with him when he spoke with one, and by Gad I shall remember the occasion as long as I live." "How was it? Tell us," we all asked. "I am the less likely to forget it," answered Will Honeycomb, "because it was the very first day I ever met Sir Roger, and that was not yesterday, I can tell you. I was a young man then —that is to say, I—I—I mean, I was—" "Yes, yes," we interrupted, laughing, "we quite understand. You were even younger then than you are now."

"Well, that's true, anyhow," answered Will, with

a rather rueful smile; "but to go on with my story. A common friend had made us known to each other at the Rainbow, and we agreed to go to the play at Covent Garden together. When we came out of the theatre, I offered to conduct him to his lodgings in St. James's Street. The night was dark, and somehow we came to speak of the Mohocks. They had been out in force two nights before, and, having caught a gentleman in a lane off Fleet Street, they slit his nose from end to end, gouged out both his eyes, and left him to grope his way home blind, all because, being a man of spirit, he had refused to take off his hat to them. 'Well,' says Sir Roger, 'I hope they won't catch us. I have no mind to have my nose slit.' 'No,' says I, 'it's a handsome nose; it would be a pity to spoil it. And, for my part, I don't wish to lose my eyes neither. But I think we are pretty safe. They have doubled the watch.'

"Just then we turned the corner of a street (I think it was King Street) and perceived at once that something was wrong. For a crowd had gathered, and we heard screams. Some hackney-coaches were drawn up, and the coachmen were standing on the seats, looking over the heads of the people, and laughing and pointing at something. We mended our pace and made up to them, and soon saw what was the matter. It was the Mohocks, and an uglier set of them I never clapped eyes on, for I noticed Lord Mohun among them, and that black cut-throat Captain Macartney. They had got a woman of the town—a common trullion—among them. I don't know what they had been doing to her, but she was down on the pavement with her face to the wall, screaming and sobbing. The moment Sir Roger saw

that, he pressed violently forward. I tried to hold him back, for I knew it was as much as his life and mine were worth to meddle with these ruffians—there must have been near a score of them; but he shook me off, broke through the crowd, planted himself in front of the woman with his face to them all, and drew his sword. And there he was, I do assure you, giving point to the whole murderous gang of them and saying—or trying to say, for he could hardly speak for passion (it was the only time I ever saw Sir Roger angry)—he was saying: 'If—if any of you d-d-dare to touch this—this lady, by God, I'll run him through the body.' And he would have done it, too; and they knew it, for they fell back, cowed and muttering.

"When Sir Roger saw that they would not come on, he put up his sword and, turning to the woman, took off his hat and made her a low bow. 'Madam,' says he, 'may I have the honour of conducting you to a coach?' She got up, dried her eyes, and took his arm. At that some of the fellows began to laugh and jeer, but one of them—I think it was Lord Mohun—recognized him and cried out, 'Why, it's Sir Roger de Coverley! Gentlemen, form line for the dance—Sir Roger de Coverley!' They fell into two lines at once, drew their swords, crossed them overhead with a clash—I think I can hear it now—and down the middle marched Sir Roger, with his hat under one arm, and the woman clinging to the other, as if he had been escorting a duchess at Court.

"When they came to a coach, he put her in, and, having inquired where she wished to go to, he directed the coachman, paid him, and stood bareheaded, bowing, while she drove away. Then he put on his

hat, and turned to the Mohocks. 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'I thank you for your courtesy. If any of you feels himself disobliged by what I have done, I am at his service. I am to be found at my lodgings in St. James's Street.' But they cried out, 'No, no! Bravo, youngster! Bravo! Well done, Sir Roger!' and some of them clapped their hands and called out, 'Ancora! ancora!' So I took his arm and we walked away together. He was all of a tremble with excitement, but he walked very stately till we had turned the corner and were out of sight of the crowd. Then, blast my eyes, if he did not burst out crying! And I, I," here Will faltered—"well, I was near blubbering myself." There was silence in the club. No one spoke, till Will cleared his voice, which had grown husky, and added: "And you may take my word for it, that was the first and the last time that ever Sir Roger spoke to a woman of the town."

VII

SIR ROGER IN THE TEMPLE

The last time Sir Roger de Coverley was at the club the talk fell, I know not how, on music. "Who is this Handel," he asked, "of whom everybody is speaking? They say he plays divinely on the organ. I should like to hear him." "There is nothing easier," replied the Templar; "he is to play the organ at the evening service in the Temple Church to-morrow. Will you come? I cannot myself stay for the service, but I will see that you get a good seat." To this proposal Sir Roger readily assented, and as I lost no opportunity of being with the good old man whenever he was in town, I begged to be allowed to join him. So it was agreed that we should meet on the morrow in the Templar's chambers a little before the hour of service, and that he should conduct us to the church and leave us there. We met next day accordingly. I never saw Sir Roger in better health and spirits. He talked gaily, and we fell in with his cheerful mood. We even ventured to rally him on the widow, and he took it in very good part. "Well, well," he said, "I sometimes think she will have me after all. But I begin to grow an old fellow—an old fellow." We stoutly denied the imputation, and insisted that on the contrary he grew younger every day. Having dissipated the slight

shade of melancholy which dimmed for a moment the habitual serenity of our friend, we sallied forth with him to stroll for a little in the garden before repairing to the church.

How well I remember it all now, though years have come and gone since then! It was a calm bright day in September, but already a few yellow leaves were drifting silently to the ground. In the court on which we issued doves were fluttering and cooing, and a fountain was plashing in the dappled shade of some ancient elms. Descending a broad flight of stone steps, we entered the garden. The beds were still gay with the rich hues of autumn, Michaelmas daisies and marigolds vying with the statelier sunflowers and hollyhocks. When we had admired them, "Come," said the Templar, "I will show you *rosa quo locorum sera moretur*". He led the way into a little thicket, where sure enough was a rose tree with some red roses still blowing fresh and sweet among the leaves. "They say, you know," he reminded us, "that in this very garden the Princes of York and Lancaster plucked the white and red roses that were to be the badges of their rival houses, and that gave their name to the Wars of the Roses." "Aye, aye," said Sir Roger, "and the red rose was the fitter emblem of the two; for they say that your white rose will never bloom on ground where blood has been spilt. You may plant a white rose tree on a battlefield, but next summer all the roses on it will blow red."

When we seemed to doubt the truth of this axiom in natural history, Sir Roger earnestly assured us that it was so. "Why, to prove it," says he, "my friend Sir Richard Devereux, of the Life Guards, was with his regiment at the bloody battle of Landen, and next

year, when he chanced to pass by the place, the whole battlefield was nothing but a great sheet of red poppies. He never saw such a blaze of scarlet in his life, not even at a review in Hyde Park." " And then the crimson wall-flower," said the Templar, willing to chime in with the old man's fancy, " everybody knows that it is called Bloody Warriors because it grows on fields of blood." " To be sure, to be sure," rejoined Sir Roger, " in my country it blooms nowhere so well as on the battlefield of Tewkesbury. Many and many a time have I seen it there on a summer's day as I have been riding past. That's the truth. But as for what the poet Herrick says about red roses, I never could believe it." " Why, what does he say about them ? " we both asked, curious to elicit the knight's opinion on a point of poetry. " Well, I am not sure that I remember the verses," he replied, " though I used to sing them when I was a young man.. I learned them from my mother, when she walked with me in the rose garden, and I once sang them there," he added, dropping his voice and looking grave, " to *her*." We knew whom he meant by *her*, and did not press him further. A vision of the rose garden at Coverley Hall, and a summer twilight, and Sir Roger pacing there with the widow, rose before my mind, and I remained silent. Rousing himself from a reverie into which he had fallen, Sir Roger went on, " Let me see, let me see,

Roses at first were white—

Oh, yes, I remember them now." And he recited in lilting tones and a high cracked voice—I think I can hear him now and see him as he stood, with the sunshine on his face, smiling and beating time with his hand :

Roses at first were white,
Till they could not agree
Whether my Sappho's breast
Or they more white should be.

But being vanquished quite,
A blush their cheeks bespread :
Since which, believe the rest,
The roses first came red.

When he had done, the Templar pulled some of the red roses and offered them to Sir Roger, who stuck them in his hat, saying : " If you will give me a slip of that rose-bush I will plant it in the garden at Coverley, and next summer you shall come and gather the roses. Aye, and I will show you the Bloody Warriors on the field of Tewkesbury too. You will believe me then. I know you gentlemen of the law are hard to persuade. But you shall see for yourself, you shall see for yourself."

In such discourse we whiled away an idle half-hour till the failing light reminded us that the time of service was at hand. So we quitted the garden and made our way through the darkening courts to the church. In the trees overhead the starlings were settling to roost with a clamorous chattering, which, Sir Roger told us, was their evensong of praise. Passing through the church porch we entered the oldest part of the ancient edifice, the original round church of the Templars, where the warrior knights lie under their stone effigies on the pavement. Sir Roger and I were putting some questions in a whisper to our friend the Templar concerning these quaint figures, lying there so still after all these ages with their up-turned faces and clasped swords, when the organ began to play. So soft and sweet and solemn were the notes that the words died away on our lips, and

we followed our friend as he beckoned us forward into the inner part of the church. There he ushered us into a stall beside a pillar and left us. The twilight was now deepening into night, the hour of all the day best fitted to compose the mind to serious thought and the offices of religion. The candles were already lit in the church, but even without their glimmering flames we could still dimly discern the interlacing arches of the vaulted roof, the rows of tall clustered columns, and between them the saints and prophets on the windows, showing in faint splendour of purple and crimson and blue against the dying light of day. The service of our English Church, beautiful at all times, seemed to me doubly beautiful in these surroundings. Above all, the ravishing sweetness of the music was such as I had never heard before. The voices of the choir blent in a sort of seraphic harmony with the deep long-drawn notes of the organ, now pealing out in a storm of triumphant exultation and joy, now dying away, as it seemed, into depths of ineffable distance. It was such music as souls in bliss might make around the throne for ever. Our hearts melted within us, and, conscious of my own unworthiness, I felt like a lost spirit at the gate of Paradise listening to the angels' song.

When the service was over, we knelt for a few moments side by side, while the solemn strains of the organ, touched by a master's hand, still rolled through the dimly lighted church. As my friend remained somewhat longer than usual at his devotions, I stole a look at him, and seeing him with his silvery hair, his clasped hands, and a look as of rapture on his venerable face, I could not but fancy myself kneeling beside a saint in heaven. We rose solemnized by the

scene and by the beautiful service to which we had just listened. When we passed out of the porch it was night and the moon had risen, making, with the dark outlines of the church, its still lighted windows, and the painted saints glowing on the panes, a picture which long dwelt in my memory. We walked together in silence to Fleet Street. As he was about to leave me, " Do you know," he said, " I have a fancy that when you and I part for the last time, I should wish it to be just thus." I was too moved to reply, and could only shake him silently by the hand. He lifted his hat, with the red roses still in it, and walked away. I do not know how it was ; perhaps his words had struck a note of foreboding in my mind, but a sense of uneasiness and sadness came over me, and I noticed with a sort of apprehension that the roses in his hat drooped and had lost some of their petals. I stood bareheaded, watching him till he disappeared in the shadows. I never saw him again. It was my last parting with Sir Roger. But I humbly trust that we may meet again in a world beyond the shadows, where roses never fade and friends shall part no more.

III

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

I

ROMAN LIFE IN THE TIME OF PLINY THE YOUNGER[1]

In the following pages I propose to invite the reader to accompany me in thought to two different scenes in two different ages—to Rome in the time of Pliny the Younger, and to London in the time of Addison.

The desire to picture to ourselves distant scenes and past ages is a natural instinct of the human mind. In such contemplations or reveries we seem to enlarge the narrow circle of our own individual life, to leave behind us for a while its cares and anxieties, perhaps its griefs and sorrows: we appear to pass into a wider, if a visionary, world, to behold in the spirit figures which we can never see in the flesh, and to listen to voices which we can never hear with the bodily ear because they have long fallen silent. In the ample body of Greek and Roman literature and art the ancients have bequeathed to us abundant materials for restoring the long faded scenes of classical antiquity, for conjuring up, as it were, by a wizard's wand the dead from their quiet graves and seeing them enact again the parts which they played in life. Yet when all is done that can be done in this way to

[1] In an abridged form this essay was read as a lecture at the Royal Institution in London on May 31, 1921, and afterwards published in the *Quarterly Review*, vol. ccxxxvi. (1921).

revive the Greek and Roman past, most of us still feel, I believe, that the ancients stand somewhat aloof from us, that they elude our grasp, that they vanish into thin air, like the ghosts they are.

One principal reason for this aloofness I take to be that in ancient literature and art men are generally presented to us rather in their public capacity than in the intimacy of private life. The great heroes of antiquity are nearly always seen in full dress, striking the same majestic attitudes as in their statues of bronze and marble. They are painted for us in the grand style of Michael Angelo and Tintoretto rather than in the truer, if humbler, manner of Rembrandt and Holbein. We behold them as soldiers on the battle-field, we hear them as orators on the tribune ; but how seldom can we follow these soldiers and orators to their homes, see them in undress, and overhear them unburdening themselves in the bosom of their families or in the heart-easing society of friends ! We can still listen to the silver accents of Pericles paying the last tribute of a grateful country to its departed brave : we can still be thrilled by the eloquence of Demosthenes thundering against Philip at Athens, or of Cicero fulminating against Mark Antony at Rome. We can still follow the advance of the Greeks under Miltiades to stem the tide of barbarian invasion on the plains of Marathon : we can still mark the dying Epaminondas, with the spear in his side, taking his long last look at the battlefield where the scarlet-coated Spartan lines were breaking under the Theban charge : we can still dimly discern the figure of Hannibal, red from the slaughter of Cannae, and looming dreadful to the trembling watchers on the walls, when the dusky African squadrons cantered up to the gates of Rome.

But with the solitary exception of Cicero, how little do we know of the private life and character of these and a thousand other great men, whose names are still household words on our lips! They defile before us, as it were, in a stately procession: we behold the gorgeous uniforms, the bemedalled breasts, the waving banners, the dancing plumes: we hear the swell or fall of stirring music with the approach or recession of the marching multitude. Yet when the pageant is over, when the procession has passed, we are apt to experience a sense of hollowness and unreality in the splendid figures who have fascinated us with a momentary glamour, only to vanish like morning mists or the fleeting imagery of dreams.

This sense of remoteness and unreality is perhaps even more perceptible in Greek than in Roman literature, and the reason of it is not to be found merely in the greater nearness to us of the Romans in time as well as in space, Roman literature having put forth its richest blooms when Greek literature had long fallen into the sere and yellow leaf. Of all species of human composition, with the possible exception of autobiography, none is so well fitted to reveal the writer's true character as letters addressed to intimate friends, and such letters, broadly speaking, are wholly wanting in Greek literature. The letters which pass under the name of Plato, even if we grant their authenticity, hardly form an exception; for they lack the perfect ease and intimacy of friendly correspondence and shed little light on the personality of the author. Latin literature in this respect is more richly endowed than Greek; for in the letters of Cicero and Pliny the Younger it has bequeathed to us documents of priceless value for the light they shed

both on the characters of the writers and on the ages in which they lived. Hence Cicero and Pliny are better known to us than any other men of classical antiquity. When we close their correspondence, we feel as if we had been acquainted with them personally, and that could the grave give up its dead, and Cicero and Pliny walk into the room, not only should we associate with them as friends and intimates, but they on their side would readily adapt themselves to the changed conditions of modern life, so similar is the working of their minds and ours.

But no one can read the letters of Cicero and Pliny without being sensible of a great difference between them. The letters of Cicero are all written to serve the purpose of the moment, whether that purpose is to transact business or to enjoy intercourse with friends at a distance; they are never studied compositions indited for the sake of literary effect and with a view to ultimate publication. In writing his letters it certainly never occurred to Cicero that they would be treasured and perused with interest by the world two thousand years after his death. Of all his friends the dearest was Atticus, and in his letters to him Cicero opened his heart with a fullness and frankness which have never been surpassed in a correspondence between intimates. The letters are all dashed off at heat: their total lack of literary finish, their ragged elliptical style, their abruptness, and often their laconic brevity, sufficiently testify to the complete lack of premeditation, to the utter absence of literary ambition with which they were written. They are the unconscious self-revelations of a good and affectionate man unburdening himself in private to a trusted friend, to whom he looks for consolation

in sorrow and help in the practical difficulties of life. Cicero never dreamed of giving them to the world. It was reserved for a wise and discerning friend to collect and publish them after his death.

Very different are the letters of Pliny. Every one of them bears the mark of the literary file. All are neat, polished, elegant; but the neatness, the polish, the elegance are clearly the result of assiduous attention to style. There are no loose ends, no chips and sawdust to be seen lying about. The grammar is faultless, the choice and collocation of the words perfect. The manner is easy, but the ease is studied rather than spontaneous; the meaning is always expressed in the simplest and clearest language, but the very simplicity and lucidity have been attained by the careful elimination of everything superfluous and ambiguous or obscure. The art is very like nature, but still it is art. The lamp has been put out of sight, but there lingers behind it a perceptible scent of the midnight oil. Indeed, Pliny himself hardly makes a secret of the artificiality of his epistolary style and of the fame which he hoped to win as a letter-writer. In the first of the letters he announces that they were collected and published by himself at the request of a friend; that they embraced such as he had written with more than ordinary care; and that if they met with a favourable reception from the public, he would add to the collection in future.

But while the letters of Pliny lack the spontaneity and perfect naturalness of the letters of Cicero, they have a very high value of their own. If they are studied, they are at the same time truthful; they give the impression of a thoroughly honest man incapable of deliberate misrepresentation and deceit. They

reflect as in a mirror the life of the cultivated and virtuous society at Rome and in Italy at the end of the first century and at the beginning of the second century of our era, an epoch when the Roman Empire was at the very summit of its power and glory, and before it began to decline and totter to its fall. The Roman Muse, too, was still prolific both in prose and verse. It was the age of Tacitus and Quintilian, of Statius, Martial, and Juvenal. Who could think in that mellow autumn of the ancient world that the winter was so near at hand? that as these authors were amongst the most brilliant, so they were to be the last of the great writers of the Latin tongue, unless we except Claudian, that poet born out of due time as if on purpose to sing the swan song of expiring Rome?

In the short space at my disposal I propose to give the reader some pictures of life at Rome and in Italy as they are painted by Pliny in his letters. The pictures, we must remember, exhibit on the whole what was best in contemporary society; they are steeped in sunshine, for Pliny was a happy and prosperous man, rich in hereditary wealth, rich in friends, amiable, affectionate, generous, always disposed to look rather on the bright than on the dark side of things. For the reverse of the medal, for the misery and cruelty, the vice and corruption which were rife in his time, we must turn to other writers—to the tragic gloom of Tacitus, to the wanton wit of Martial, to the fierce invective of Juvenal. Not but that the sunny pages of Pliny are here and there chequered by dark memories of the reign of terror under the bad emperors Nero and Domitian, whom he had outlived. "Does it not seem to you only the other day", he asks a

correspondent, "that Nero was on the throne?"[1] Happily he survived to see the reign and to enjoy the friendship of Trajan, one of the best and ablest of the Roman emperors. Most of his letters were written in that fortunate time, the zenith of imperial glory.

Pliny was born under Nero in the year A.D. 61 or 62; for he mentions that he was in his eighteenth year at the time of the great eruption of Vesuvius,[2] which happened in the year A.D. 79. His birthplace was Como, on the Lake of Como, where he inherited estates both from his father and from his mother.[3] He owned several villas on the shore of the lake, and he has described the situation of two of them.[4] "They are both situated", he says, "like the villas at Baiae. One of them stands upon a rock and overlooks the lake; the other touches it. Each has its peculiar beauties and recommends itself the more to their owner by mere force of contrast. The former enjoys a wider, the latter a nearer prospect of the lake. The one follows the gentle curve of a single bay; the lofty ridge upon which the other is perched divides two bays. Here you have a straight alley running along the shore; there you have a spacious terrace curving in a gentle sweep. The one does not feel the force of the waves, which break on the other. From the one you can look down on the fishermen at work below; from the other you may fish yourself and cast your hook from your chamber, and almost from your bed, as if from a boat."

But Pliny lived mostly at Rome and visited his native place and his ancestral estates only occasionally

[1] *Ep.* iii. 7.

[2] *Ep.* vi. 20, 5. The chronology of Pliny's life and letters has been carefully examined by Th. Mommsen in his treatise, "Zur Lebensgeschichte des jüngeren Plinius", reprinted in his *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. iv. (Berlin, 1906) pp. 366-468.

[3] *Ep.* vii. 11

[4] *Ep.* ix. 7.

in order to see his relations and to look after his tenants. On one such visit he speaks of going the round of his little property, hearing a deal of grumbling from the rustics and inspecting their accounts, which he says he did hurriedly and unwillingly, grudging the time which he would rather have passed over his books.[1] But though he spent the best part of his life immersed in the business and bustle of the capital, Pliny retained a fond affection for the land of his birth, and from the smoke and din and tumult of the great city his thoughts seem often to have gone out with something of wistfulness and regret to the peace and beauty of his old home far away among the Italian mountains. Thus, writing from Rome to a friend, who possessed a fine villa on the Lake of Como, he asks him, "How fares Como, your darling and mine? how fares the delightful villa? the colonnade where spring for ever reigns? the shady plane-tree grove? the canal whose crystal water mirrors its green banks? what say you of the firm yet springy alley? the bath flooded with sunshine? the spacious saloon, the cosy parlour, all the elegant apartments for repose both at noon and night? Do these enjoy my friend and divide his time between them? Or does the management of your property, as usual, call you frequently from this agreeable retreat? If the scene of your enjoyment lies wholly there, you are blest indeed; if not, you are still one out of a thousand." [2]

Again, writing to the same friend, Pliny asks him, "How is my friend employed? Is it in study, or angling, or the chase? Or does he unite all three, as he well may on the banks of our favourite lake? For the lake will supply you with fish, as the woods that

[1] *Ep.* v. 14. [2] *Ep.* i. 3.

surround it will afford you game ; while the solemnity of that sequestered scene will at the same time dispose your mind to contemplation. Whether you are entertained with all or any of these agreeable amusements, I cannot bring myself to say, ' I envy you ' ; yet it irks me that I may not partake of them too ; a happiness I as earnestly long for as a sick man does for wine, baths, and water-springs. Shall I never break loose (if I may not disentangle myself) from those snares that thus closely enmesh me ? I doubt indeed, never ; for new affairs keep budding out of the old, while yet the former remain unfinished : such an endless train of business daily rises upon me ; so numerous are the ties—I may say the chains—that bind me." [1]

In a case in which his services as an advocate seem to have been retained by his native town he allowed himself to launch out in its praise, interlarding the dry details of legal business with descriptions of places and scenery in a style of such rich and even poetic eloquence that he felt bound to apologize for it in sending a copy of the speech to a friend.[2] Unfortunately the speech is lost. Many of us would rather have had his panegyric on Como, spoken from the heart, than his dull and stilted panegyric on Trajan, which has survived.

Yet the beautiful lake was not without its tragedy. Sailing on it one day an aged friend of Pliny pointed out to him a villa of which a room projected over the water. " From that room ", said the old man, " a woman of our town once threw herself and her husband." When Pliny inquired the cause of the tragedy, his friend informed him that the husband

[1] *Ep.* ii. 8. [2] *Ep.* ii. 5.

had long suffered from grievous ulcers, and that his wife, at last despairing of a cure, persuaded him to put an end to his sufferings and offered to die with him. He consented, and tying herself fast to his wasted body the faithful wife plunged with him into the lake.[1]

But Pliny did not express his affection for his birthplace merely in fine words; he manifested it in a practical fashion by several munificent benefactions. Thus he founded a library at Como:[2] he set apart a portion of a fine estate for the maintenance of boys and girls of gentle birth, but of poor families;[3] and finding that there was no good high school at Como, and that parents were obliged to send their children as far as Milan to receive their higher education, he offered to contribute a third of the capital necessary for the establishment of such a school at Como, on condition that the other two-thirds should be contributed by the parents; for though he was quite willing to disburse the whole sum out of his own pocket, he wisely judged that the school would be more valued and better managed if the expense of its maintenance fell to some extent on those who were to benefit by it.[4]

However, it is time to accompany Pliny from the peaceful seclusion of Como to the principal scene of his activity in Rome. He was a practising lawyer, and the court in which he pleaded, and which often rang to his eloquence, stood in the very heart of the great city. It was known as the Court of the Hundred Men (*centum viri*) and occupied the Basilica Julia, a vast structure on the south side of the forum. The ruins

[1] *Ep.* vi. 24.

[2] *Ep.* i. 8. This and other benefactions of Pliny are recorded, together with his public offices, in an inscription which seems to have been set up in baths bequeathed by him to Como. The inscription is now in the church of St. Ambrose at Milan. See H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 2927, vol. ii. p. 570.

[3] *Ep.* i. 8, vii. 18; H. Dessau, *l.c.*

[4] *Ep.* iv. 13.

of the edifice, consisting of a spacious platform with drums of columns arranged in rows on it, are familiar to all visitors to Rome at the present day. The building was begun by Julius Caesar and completed by Augustus, who named it Julia after his adoptive father. It comprised a great central hall, surrounded by triple rows of columns, which formed double aisles on every side. Above the ground floor there was a second floor opening through colonnades on the central hall, so that from these upper colonnades, as from galleries, spectators could look down on the proceedings of the court in the great hall below and hear at their ease the pleadings of the lawyers. Whether the central hall was roofed or only screened by an awning from the sun and rain is doubtful. Remains of the staircase leading to the upper galleries can still be seen on the south side of the building.[1] This was the scene of Pliny's forensic labours for many years ;[2] it was here that he won many of his oratorical triumphs, crowded and fashionable audiences hanging on his lips, standing several rows deep on the floor of the court, and bending forward from the galleries to catch the accents of the orator as they rose or fell with the fluctuations of passion and emotion in his speech. Sometimes on these occasions room had to be found for the hearers even on the bench of justice, and the court was so packed that Pliny could only get to his place through the seats of the jury.[3] How assiduously he prepared for these displays, we know from his letters. He bestowed endless labour on the composition and correction of his speeches. They have all

[1] J. H. Middleton, *The Remains of Ancient Rome* (London and Edinburgh, 1892), i. 269 *sqq.* ; R. Lanciani, *The Ruins and Excavations of Ancient Rome* (London, 1897), pp. 275 *sqq.*

[2] *Ep.* vi. 12, "*In arena mea, hoc est apud centumviros*".

[3] *Ep.* iv. 16, vi. 33.

perished, and if we may judge of his oratory by his *Panegyric* on Trajan, which we possess, the world is not much the poorer for the loss.

Pliny made no secret either of the guerdon of posthumous renown which he hoped for, or of the pains he was at to deserve it. His friends recognized his ambition and shared, or politely professed to share, his hopes. In sending to him a book of light verse, the poet Martial thus apostrophizes his Muse, bidding her go to Pliny's house on the Esquiline, but to be careful not to break in on the orator while he was inditing his speech for the law court.

> "Go seek, my Muse, the studious bower
> Where Pliny gives the long, long hour
> To polishing that page divine
> Which shall to future ages shine
> And rival, wondrous Tully! thine.
> But tipsy Muse, beware, beware
> To tread with reeling steps that stair,
> While graver Muses linger there
> In the pure freshness of the morning air.
> Go rather when the late lamp burns,
> When the dance circles in its giddy turns!
> Go, wanton, when the wine-cup flows,
> When Bacchus revels, and when reigns the rose!
> Then crowned with fragrant chaplets gay
> E'en Cato's self might read my lay." [1]

Pliny mentions that not infrequently, when he was speaking in court, the judges, after preserving their judicial calm and solemnity as long as possible, were so moved by his eloquence that in spite of themselves they rose to their feet and applauded.[2] Yet his practice at the bar did not bring him unmixed happiness. In one of his letters he complains that his pleadings in court, while they engrossed his time, were the source of more weariness than pleasure; that the

[1] Martial, x. 19; Pliny, *Ep.* iii. 26.

[2] *Ep.* ix. 23.

cases in which he was engaged were for the most part tedious and trivial; and that there were very few members of the bar with whom he had any satisfaction in appearing. Most of the pleaders, he remarks, were young men of no distinction who tried their prentice hands or voices at speaking in the Court of the Hundred Men without the least regard to the dignity of that august body. "I remember the time", he says, "when even gentlemen of the best family durst not plead without an introduction from a man of consular rank; but nowadays all the ancient barriers and safeguards of the profession are broken down, all distinctions are levelled, and anybody may burst into court and harangue the jury without so much as saying, 'By your leave'." To add to Pliny's disgust a practice had grown up of hiring persons to applaud the speeches of barristers in court. These mercenary admirers ran from court to court as they were paid for their services, and led by a sort of fugleman, who gave the signal, they broke at intervals into uproarious applause, without understanding and often without even hearing a syllable of what was said. To such an extent was this abuse carried that Pliny observes bitterly that, if you happened to be passing the Basilica Julia when the court was sitting, and wished to judge of the comparative merits of the pleaders, you need not take your seat on the bench or attend to the speeches; all you had to do was to listen to the applause, for you might be quite sure that the barrister who got the loudest claps was the worst speaker.[1]

But Pliny sometimes spoke in more important cases before a more dignified assembly. He was a member of

[1] *Ep.* ii. 14. Juvenal alludes (xiii. 32 *sq.*) to the mercenary applause with which the speech of a wealthy pleader was greeted in court by his poor dependents.

the Senate, and more than once addressed that august body in defence of distant provinces which appealed to Rome for justice on governors who had cruelly wronged and oppressed them. It was thus that he pleaded the cause of Africa against Marius Priscus,[1] and the cause of Andalusia (Baetica) against Caecilius Classicus.[2] The first of these trials lasted three days: the Senate-house was crowded: the Emperor Trajan himself presided; and Pliny was supported in the impeachment by his friend, the illustrious historian Tacitus. He spoke for nearly five hours with great applause, and the emperor testified his friendly interest in the speaker by repeatedly sending word to him to spare his voice and his breath, when he thought, or Pliny fancied that he thought, that the passionate vehemence of the speaker imposed too great a strain on his feeble frame. Perhaps the emperor's solicitude was not so purely disinterested as the gratified orator imagined. The sensible Trajan, himself a man of few words, may have been of opinion that a shorter speech would have answered the purposes of justice equally well. But apparently there was no stopping the impetuous flow of Pliny's rhetoric. It was this trial that Macaulay had in mind when, describing the brilliant audience which witnessed the impeachment of Warren Hastings in Westminster Hall, he says that "there the historian of the Roman Empire thought of the days when Cicero pleaded the cause of Sicily against Verres, and when, before a senate which still retained some show of freedom, Tacitus thundered against the oppressor of Africa".

Pliny lived in a literary age, when authors abounded, and when it was customary for them to

[1] *Ep.* ii. 11. [2] *Ep.* iii. 4, iii. 9.

recite their works to a select circle of friends before they gave them to the public. These recitations are often mentioned by Pliny and his contemporaries. To judge by their references, the feelings of the reader and of his hearers on these occasions were often very different. Juvenal tells us that he was goaded into writing poetry in order to have his revenge on the poets whose long-winded epics he had so often been compelled to endure in silence.[1] Among the terrors of Rome he enumerates fires, the collapse of houses, and poets spouting in the month of August.[2] He says that when a poor poet proposed to give a recitation, his rich patron, who wrote poetry himself and yielded the palm to Homer only on the score of his antiquity, would lend him a shut-up house in an out-of-the-way quarter of the city, where the chairs and benches had to be hired for the occasion at the poet's own expense, though the patron would supply him gratuitously with some of his hangers-on to sit at the back of the room and applaud at what they might deem the appropriate moment.[3] He tells us that the town crowded to hear Statius recite his epic, the *Thebaid*, and that the sweet voice and harmonious numbers of the poet captivated the audience; but that nevertheless, though they applauded him to the echo and even damaged the benches in their enthusiasm, the bard might have gone supperless to bed, if he had not found a purchaser for one of his plays in a pantomime actor.[4] Martial paints in vivid colours the horror and dismay excited by a certain poet who so pestered his acquaintances with his recitations that they fled at the sight of him, taking refuge in sweat

[1] Juvenal, i. 1 *sqq.*
[2] Juvenal, iii. 5 *sqq.*
[3] Juvenal, vii. 36 *sqq.*
[4] Juvenal, vii. 82 *sqq.*

baths, swimming baths, or anywhere else, to escape from him ; so that wherever he went he had

> "Amazement in his van, with flight combined,
> And sorrow's faded form, and solitude behind."[1]

Being a very good-natured and obliging man, Pliny made a point of attending the recitations of his friends and of applauding their productions, whatever he may have thought of them privately ;[2] but probably his applause was sincere, for if we may judge by what he says of his friends in his letters, he saw nothing but what was admirable in them : if there were any geese in the flock, Pliny took them for swans. However, from the descriptions which he gives of these literary assemblies we gather that many of the listeners were not so polite and considerate as himself. In one of his letters he says that the month of April had been very prolific in poets, hardly a day having passed in which one of them had not been spouting ; but though he himself rejoiced at this display of taste and talent, the audiences at the recitations showed an unaccountable reluctance to come up to the scratch, when the fatal moment arrived for entering the lecture-room. Instead of taking the plunge, most of them continued to dawdle in the lobby, passing the time of day to each other and sending in somebody now and then to see and report whether the author was come in, whether he had got through his exordium, and whether he seemed to be nearing the end of his manuscript. When that welcome news was received, they would stroll in, much against their will, sit for a little, and then leave before the end, some of them slinking out

[1] Martial, iii. 44. Compare the poet's other epigrams on the same bard, iii. 45, iii. 50.

[2] *Ep.* i. 13, v. 17, viii. 12.

as if they were ashamed, but others getting up and marching out of the room as bold as brass.[1]

In another letter Pliny pours out his indignation at two or three gentlemen in the audience who had sat through the whole performance like dummies, without opening their lips or moving a hand, nay even without so much as yawning or stretching their limbs to show that they were bored. This attitude of statuesque passivity and stoical resignation, which they maintained to the bitter end, seems to have provoked Pliny more than if they had given vent to their feelings in hisses and boohoos.[2]

But even worse things might happen to an author on these occasions. It was a practice with some poets to address or dedicate their poems to a particular friend, whose name they invoked at the outset as the only begetter of their poetical offspring, their aider and abettor in their raid on the realm of the Muses. If the friend, for example, was called Balbus, they might apostrophize him in some such lofty phrase as,

"O Balbus, thou dost bid me to strike the sounding lyre."

Well, at one of these gatherings the poet addressed his poems in a like high-flown strain to a friend named Priscus, who was in the audience, and who happened to be, in the opinion of some people, not perfectly watertight in the top story. So when the poet burst out, "O Priscus, thou dost bid me—", Priscus called out from the audience, "No, I don't". This unlooked-for response damped the poet's ardour. The audience tittered, if they did not guffaw, and the moral which Pliny drew from the incident was that when you gave

[1] *Ep.* i. 13. [2] *Ep.* vi. 17.

a recitation, you had better look to the sanity of your hearers as well as your own.[1]

Undeterred by such unfortunate incidents, which he had witnessed, Pliny himself was one of the most persistent and ruthless of reciters, hurling verse as well as prose at the heads of his hearers, sometimes for several days together. For unlike some more modest or compassionate authors he made a boast of never skipping a line or a word.[2] He had no mercy on his friends. He invited them to come and hear him read his precious *Panegyric*. They came in very bad weather and bore with fortitude the reading of the dreary speech for two mortal days, the drip of the rain outside forming an appropriate accompaniment to the drone of the reader's voice within ; nay more, the survivors actually implored the orator to continue the reading for a third day, and he naturally yielded to their polite importunity.[3]

Another time, in the sweltering month of July, when the law courts were usually closed and the lawyers dispersed to the mountains or the sea,[4] the pitiless Pliny invited his friends to dinner and read his poems to them across the table on two successive days.[5] He has not recorded the dinner which he set before his guests at this feast of reason ; but in another letter, addressed to a friend who had accepted an invitation to dinner but had failed to come, Pliny banters the absentee and seeks to make his mouth

[1] *Ep.* vi. 15. However, Priscus was an eminent lawyer ; and it is quite possible, as Mr. Mackail thinks (*Latin Literature*, p. 229), that his interruption was a joke, which Pliny misunderstood. Certainly, if Pliny had any sense of humour, he has not allowed it to transpire in his letters.

[2] *Ep.* vii. 21.

[3] *Ep.* iii. 18.

[4] Compare Statius, *Sylv.* iv. 4. 39 *sqq.*

[5] *Ep.* viii. 21. The practice of reciting poetry at dinner seems to have been common in Pliny's time. See Juvenal, xi. 179 *sqq.* ; Martial, iii. 45, iii. 50, xi. 52. 16 *sqq.*

water by retailing to him all the dainties he had missed. He had prepared, he writes, one lettuce and three snails apiece, with two eggs, barley-water, some sweet wine and snow, olives, beets, gourds, onions, and a thousand other titbits equally sumptuous. This delicious banquet was further to be seasoned, according to the taste and fancy of the guest, with the recitation of poetry, the strumming of a lute, or the capers of a clown, or with all three of them, if his soul thirsted for such a display of all the talent. But strange to say the expected guest had preferred to go to another house, at which the principal attractions appear to have been oysters and chitterlings, with Spanish dances to follow.[1]

I fear we must conclude that Pliny gave his friends very bad dinners, and the verses with which he interlarded them appear to have been no better, if we may judge of them by the few specimens which he has preserved in his letters.[2] Under the depressing influence of wretched dinners and execrable poetry the patience of the sufferers gave way at last, and they told him plainly that he was a very bad reader, and that, though they might perhaps put up with his reading of his speeches, to hear him spouting his own poetry was more than they could bear. Poor Pliny, the blow seems to have staggered him. He had been so pleased with himself and his verses, he had so enjoyed reading them to a select circle of friends gathered round what he had fondly regarded as his hospitable board, and now to be told that his manner of reading was insufferable! He makes the sad confession in a letter to a friend and asks him what he is

[1] *Ep.* i. 15. As to the dances of Spanish dancing-girls at Roman dinners, compare Juvenal, xi. 162 *sqq.*; Martial, v. 78. 25 *sqq.* [2] *Ep.* vii. 4 and 9.

to do. He had thought of getting his freedman to read for him, but he remembered that the man had no practice in reciting and might be nervous in face of the audience. And supposing he entrusted the delicate duty to his henchman, what was the poet himself to do during the recitation? Was he to hold his tongue and assume an attitude of easy negligence as if he were an indifferent auditor? or was he to accompany the recitation with appropriate gestures and prompt the reader in a whisper? How he solved the problem, we do not know: the curtain drops on the author in his perplexity and distress.[1]

Yet fashionable as authorship was among the cultivated classes of Roman society in Pliny's time, there seems to have lingered at the back of many minds an idea that the writing of books, and especially of poetry, was an occupation unworthy of a gentleman. The notion comes out amusingly, if unconsciously, in a comparison which Pliny's contemporary, the satirist Juvenal, institutes between Orestes and the emperor Nero. Both of these erratic gentlemen had murdered their mothers; but after weighing them in the balance, the poet concludes that, matricide for matricide, Orestes was the better man of the two, because, after all, he had not, like Nero, degraded himself to the level of Homer by writing an epic on the Trojan war.[2]

Pliny was a contemporary and friend of Tacitus, and the two writers, as generous rivals, encouraged each other in the race for "that immortal garland" which is to be won "not without dust and heat". While Pliny was proud to be coupled with Tacitus in the mouths of his fellow-citizens, he frankly acknowledged the historian to be his master and truly presaged

[1] *Ep.* ix. 34.

[2] Juvenal, viii. 215-221.

the immortality of his histories.[1] In their company we live as it were on Olympian heights in the Silver Age of Latin literature. Their elevation was more than metaphorical; for Pliny at least lived in the beautiful quarter of parks and gardens on the summit of the Esquiline hill,[2] which, with its pure air and far views away to the Alban hills and the purple Apennines,[3] seemed a different world from the squalid, noisy, crowded streets in the valleys below, where poor poets lived in garrets, and from which they toiled up the hill in the early morning to attend a levee in one of the great houses, when the stars were paling in the sky and the hoar frost lay thick on the summit of the Esquiline.[4]

Of that life down in the valley, with all its meanness, squalor, and vice, the aristocratic Pliny would seem to have been serenely unconscious. He never alludes to it in his letters. If we would know what it was, we must turn to the pages of the two poets who lived in that shabby quarter of the town, Martial and Juvenal. From Martial we get glimpses of the motley crowds who jostled each other in the streets of Rome, where dusky Ethiopians mingled with fair Sygambrians, where lean Arabs encountered sturdy Sarmatians, where Sabaeans and Cilicians jabbered or gesticulated with Thracians and Britons, and where strange folk from the sources of the Nile gazed with wonder on barbarians from the utmost coasts of Ocean.[5] The same poet, who lived up three flights of

[1] *Ep.* iv. 13, vii. 20, vii. 33, viii. 7, ix. 14, ix. 23.

[2] As to Pliny's house on the Esquiline hill, see *Ep.* iii. 21. As to this quarter of Rome, see R. Lanciani, *The Ruins and Excavations of Ancient Rome* (London, 1897), pp. 396 *sqq.*

[3] Strabo noted (v. 3. p. 238) that Tibur, Praeneste, and Tusculum were all visible from Rome. For the views of the mountains from Rome, see also Horace, *Odes*, i. 9. 1 *sq.*; Martial, iv. 64. 11 *sqq.*

[4] Juvenal, v. 19 *sqq.*, 76 *sqq.*, xi. 51; Martial, v. 22, x. 19.

[5] Martial, *De spectaculis*, 3.

stairs,[1] complained that in Rome there was no place where a poor man could either think or sleep. In the morning he was roused from his slumber by the drone of voices in the early school hard by; in the night he was wakened by the thump of mallets pounding corn in the bakehouse next door; and all day long he could not enjoy a nap for the clink of hammers in the shops of the braziers. The chatter and laughter of the passers-by penetrated with painful distinctness into his bedroom; and when he went out into the street he could hardly make his way through the traffic for the importunity of Jewish beggars, the sellers of sulphur matches, and seamen with bandaged limbs and doleful tales of shipwreck.[2] The very pavements were so blocked with the stalls and booths of hucksters, with the sign-posts of taverns, and with barbers brandishing their razors and shaving their customers in the thick of the crowd, that even magistrates had to walk in the mire in the middle of the road.[3] At the entrance of the Subura, the meanest and most disreputable street in Rome, hung the blood-stained scourges of the executioners,[4] as a grim warning to the cut-throats and cut-purses who haunted that Alsatia or White Friars of the ancient world.

But nowhere is the state of the Roman streets in Pliny's time painted so graphically as in the third satire of Juvenal. The details of his brilliant picture have been so well focussed by Mr. Mackail in his admirable history of Latin literature that I cannot do better than quote the passage. He writes: "In this

[1] Martial, i. 117. 7.

[2] Martial, xii. 57.

[3] Martial, vii. 61. 11. However, the poet writes as if the state of things which he describes belonged to the past, the protruding stalls and booths having been swept away by a decree of Domitian, so that thoroughfares, which had been contracted into lanes, were now expanded into streets.

[4] Martial, ii. 17. 2.

elaborate indictment of the life of the capital, put into the mouth of a man who is leaving it for a little sleepy provincial town, he draws a picture of the Rome he knew, its social life and its physical features, its everyday sights and sounds, that brings it before us more clearly and sharply than even the Rome of Horace or Cicero. The drip of the water from the aqueduct that passed over the gate, from which the dusty squalid Appian Way stretched through its long suburb ; the garret under the tiles where, just as now, the pigeons sleeked themselves in the sun and the rain drummed on the roof ; the narrow crowded streets, half choked with the builders' carts, ankle-deep in mud, and the pavement ringing under the heavy military boots of guardsmen ; the tavern waiters trotting along with a pyramid of hot dishes on their head ; the flowerpots falling from high window ledges ; night, with the shuttered shops, the silence broken by some sudden street brawl, the darkness shaken by a flare of torches as some great man, wrapped in his scarlet cloak, passes along from a dinner-party with his long train of clients and slaves : these scenes live for us in Juvenal, and are perhaps the picture of ancient Rome that is most abidingly impressed on our memory."[1]

With such scenes in our minds we can the better enjoy the peace and tranquillity of cultivated life in the gardens of the Esquiline, as they are mirrored for us in the letters of Pliny. It was there, among the parks and gardens, that Maecenas had his stately mansion, the Holland House of ancient Rome ; it was there that he gathered round him the men of letters who have more than repaid his hospitality by graving his

[1] J. W. Mackail, *Latin Literature* (London, 1895), p. 223.

name on tablets which rust cannot corrode nor time dilapidate. It was to that house in its verdant gardens, above the fog and mist of the city, that Augustus in his hours of sickness used to be carried up to recruit in its purer air and untroubled quiet.[1] And thither, no doubt, Pliny was glad to escape in the evening from the throng, the din, and the turmoil of the forum, when his day's work in the law courts was over.

How spacious and how quiet were these parks and gardens of noble Romans on the summits of the Roman hills we can gather from the descriptions or allusions of Martial. In one epigram he speaks of a mansion which enjoyed all the amenities of the country in the heart of the city, surrounded by vineyards as fruitful as those of Falernum, and by a park so ample that the owner could drive his carriage with ease in its broad avenue, while in his bedroom he might sleep undisturbed either by the sound of voices or by an intrusive sunbeam stealing in through the thickly curtained window.[2] In another poem he describes the few acres of a friend's garden on the ridge of the Janiculum as more blessed than the gardens of the Hesperides, basking in sunshine all their own under a cloudless heaven, while mists hid the winding vales below. From this happy pleasance the eye could roam at large over the seven hills of Rome away to the Alban and Tusculan mountains and to little towns far off in the Etrurian and Sabine countries. And near at hand you could look down on the Flaminian and Salarian highroads, and see the carriages driving along them without hearing the sound of the wheels; you could watch the boats and barges gliding down

[1] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 72. As to the house of Maecenas on the Esquiline, see the commentators on Horace, *Sat.* i. 8. 14. [2] Martial, xii. 57.

the river and shooting the Mulvian bridge, while the boatswain's call and the hoarse cries of the bargemen were lost in the distance.[1] The owner of this calm retreat was a man of letters and a friend of the poet; he had a library where the reader, looking up from his book, could gaze across the Tiber at the great city under its curtain of smoke, and it was Martial's wish that his own volumes of verses might find a place, beside the works of greater poets, in this favoured haunt of the Muses.[2]

We need not wonder that with his taste for books and study Pliny was indifferent to the vulgar amusements to which in his days the rabble of Rome was passionately addicted. In one of his letters he tells a friend that he had passed the last few days very agreeably among his books, reading and writing in the most perfect tranquillity, while down below the chariot races were being run in the Circus Maximus; and he expresses his astonishment that so many thousands of grown-up people should be obsessed by such a childish craze for seeing horses galloping and men standing in chariots. "If", says he, "it was the speed of the horses or the skill of the drivers which attracted them, there might be some sense in it. But what they set their hearts on is the colour of a particular jacket; and if in the very heat of the race the drivers could change jackets, their partisans in the crowd would simultaneously transfer their allegiance and desert the very horses and drivers whom but a moment before they had been straining their eyes to see and their throats to greet." [3]

The colours of the jackets to which Pliny here refers so contemptuously were four in number, red,

[1] Martial, iv. 64. [2] Martial, vii. 17. [3] *Ep.* ix. 6.

white, blue, and green.[1] The emperor Domitian attempted to add two more, gold and purple;[2] but apparently these colours did not take the popular fancy and were soon abandoned. Even red and white, the two original colours, in time dropped out of use, and the rivalry was limited to the green and the blue. In the time of Pliny, and indeed for a good many years before it, the popular colour appears to have been the green. The crazy emperor Caligula was passionately devoted to the Green faction, as it was called. He often dined and spent the evening in the stable of the Greens: at one of his revels he presented the Green driver with two million sesterces; and such was his care for one of the Green horses that on the night before the races he sent soldiers round the neighbourhood of the stables to command silence, lest the slumber of the animal should be disturbed.[3] The emperor Nero also favoured the Greens;[4] nay, he even showed himself in public driving a chariot and wearing the Green livery.[5] Juvenal observes that when a great roar from the Circus suddenly rent the air, the listener at a distance might be quite sure that Green had won; for if it had lost, Rome would have been plunged in mourning as profound as on the day when she heard that her regiments had bitten the dust at Cannae.[6] Martial speaks of a Blue driver flogging his horses, and yet hardly getting them out of a footpace, probably because he feared to excite the anger of the crowd by a Blue victory.[7] However, the respective merits of Blue and Green were canvassed

[1] Tertullian, *De spectaculis*, 9. Tertullian here says that originally there were only two colours, white and red.

[2] Suetonius, *Domitian*, 7.

[3] Suetonius, *Caligula*, 55.

[4] Suetonius, *Nero*, 22.

[5] Dio Cassius, lxiii. 6. Nero's partiality for the Green faction is alluded to by Martial (xi. 33).

[6] Juvenal, xi. 193 *sqq.*

[7] Martial, vi. 46.

at dinner tables[1] and made the subject of bets.[2] In later times the rivalry between the two colours led to the most frantic excesses. Under the emperor Justinian, who favoured the Blue faction, a riot took place at Constantinople in which the Blues are reported to have massacred thirty thousand Greens on the race-course.[3] Even in the time of Juvenal and Pliny the whole of Rome is said to have been crammed into the Circus to witness the chariot-race;[4] and among the spectators on at least one occasion was the historian Tacitus,[5] who seems not to have shared his friend Pliny's distaste for such spectacles. To the Roman mob of that day, if we may trust the evidence of Juvenal, the only things in life that mattered were free bread and the shows of the Circus;[6] and when a Roman bankrupt gave leg-bail to his creditors and retired to Baiae, the only regret he felt at exchanging the capital for that fashionable watering-place was caused by the reflection that he would miss the amusements of the Circus for a whole year.[7] If, says the satirist, a man can only tear himself away from the attractions of the Circus, he may buy a good house and a little garden in a country town for the same sum that he now pays in one year's rent of a dark hole at Rome.[8]

We should be glad to think that the gentle and humane Pliny disapproved of gladiatorial exhibitions, that foul blot on the character of his countrymen. He never speaks of having witnessed any of them, and from his silence we may reasonably infer that he

[1] Martial, x. 48. 23.

[2] Petronius, *Sat.* 70, at end.

[3] Procopius, *Bell. Persic.* i. 24; Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chapter xl.

[4] Juvenal, xi. 193 *sqq.*

[5] Pliny, *Ep.* ix. 23.

[6] Juvenal, x. 80 *sq.*, "*Duas tantum res anxius optat, | panem et circenses*".

[7] Juvenal, xi. 46-53.

[8] Juvenal, iii. 223-231.

was at least as averse to the horrors of the arena as he unquestionably was to the far more innocent pastimes of the Circus. But that he did not condemn the combats of gladiators on principle is proved by a passage in one of his letters, in which he commends the conduct of a friend who had promised the people of Verona a show of gladiators in honour of his deceased wife; Pliny only regretted that the African panthers, which were to have formed part of the spectacle, had been delayed by bad weather at sea and arrived too late to take part in the show.[1] Hence we may conclude that on this occasion the slaughter of men was to have been varied, we may almost say mitigated, by the combats of wild beasts in the great amphitheatre at Verona. That amphitheatre stands almost intact to this day. Many of my readers may have sat on its tiers of seats and looked down on the bloodless arena.

One of the redeeming features in the somewhat stern and hard character of the ancient Romans was their genuine love of rural life. That love manifested itself not merely in the verses of poets like Catullus, Virgil, and Horace, where the ring of truth in their praise of the country is unmistakeable; even a hardened worldling like Martial preferred, or professed to prefer, the country to the town,[2] and, grown old in the luxury and dissipation of Rome, yearned for the simplicity and quiet of life in his native Spain, recalling with a fond regret the cool river that ran by his birthplace Bilbilis, the rose-gardens of Peteris, the sunny shores of Tarragona in winter, and the cloudless summer skies where Tagus rolled his golden stream under the woodland shade.[3] The Spanish poet

[1] *Ep.* vi. 34. [2] Martial, i. 55. [3] Martial, i. 49, iv. 55, x. 20, x. 96, x. 104.

had the good sense, like a greater English poet, to retire from the great city and spend the evening of his days in the home of his youth ; and the pitying verses which he addressed to his friend Juvenal, still immersed in the smoke, the squalor, and the splendour of the metropolis, breathe the perfect content which the writer felt at having exchanged the gilded shackles of urban life for the ease and freedom of existence in a country town.[1]

The same taste for the country which Roman poets displayed in their verses, Roman nobles manifested more practically in their passion for building themselves houses in beautiful natural situations, far from the fever and the fret of Rome, whether by the tumbling waters and hanging woods of Tibur, by the calm lakes that sleep in the green hollows of the Alban hills, on the shores of Latium beside the Tyrrhenian Sea, or on the lovely bay of Naples under the dreaming Campanian sky. In this respect we moderns feel ourselves much more akin to the ancient Romans than to the ancient Greeks, who in their life and writings showed comparatively little taste for the beauties of nature. The war-broken soldier Xenophon retired to the rich and beautiful valley of the Alpheus as the home of his old age, but he did so only when he was exiled from his native Athens.[2] But is there a single authentic instance of a Greek in antiquity who deliberately preferred the country to the town as a place of residence ? or who even sometimes withdrew to the quiet and seclusion of the country for rest and refreshment after the bustle and turmoil of city life ? It is said, indeed, that Euripides, to shun the multitude,

[1] Martial, xii. 18 ; compare xii. 21, xii. 31.
[2] Xenophon, *Anabasis*, v. 3. 7-13.

fitted up for himself a dwelling in a sea cave of the island of Salamis, and that many of the metaphors in his poetry were suggested by the daily sight of the blue expanse of shimmering water and by the roar or lullaby of the waves sounding perpetually in his ears.[1] If the story is true, it testifies rather to the poet's hatred of men than to his love of nature. Again, we are told that Demosthenes was morbidly sensitive to harsh sounds and dissonant clamour, and that, in order to habituate himself to face the noisy mob in the public assemblies, he used to go down to the sea and there, pacing the beach, declaim against the thunder of the breakers.[2] But plainly the orator's motive for taking these solitary walks on the shore was not a simple delight in contemplating the restless ocean and listening to its melancholy music. The real feeling of the Greeks to the country is clearly expressed in the words which Plato puts into the mouth of Socrates on that immortal summer noon, when the philosopher was lured for once by a friend from the streets of Athens, to wade barefoot in the shallow stream of the Ilissus and to rest on a grassy bank under the shadow of a spreading plane-tree, fanned by a gentle breeze, inhaling the sweet scent of the *agnus castus* in bloom, and with the whisper of the leaves, the purling of the water, and the shrill hum of the cicalas in his ears. There, lapped in all the charms of an Attic landscape at its loveliest, the sage was taxed by his friend with never going into the country or even stepping outside the walls of Athens, and he did not deny the charge, but defended himself by saying that he was a lover of

[1] *Vitarum Scriptores Græci Minores*, ed. A. Westermann (Brunswick, 1845), p 137. The authority for the story seems to have been Philochorus. See Aulus Gellius, xv. 20. 5.

[2] *Vitarum Scriptores Græci Minores*, ed. A. Westermann, pp. 299 *sq.*

knowledge, and that his teachers were not fields and trees but men in the city.[1] Perhaps the small size of the ancient Greek states may have helped to check the taste for a country life. When the territory of a state, as often happened in ancient Greece, was little larger than an English county, it must have been difficult to find any spot in it distant more than a day or two's march from the frontier; and with the unstable and often hostile relations which commonly subsisted between neighbouring republics, a man had small temptation to build a lonely house in a district which might almost at any moment be swept and raided by the enemy. In such circumstances people naturally chose to herd together for safety behind the strong walls and barred gates of cities.

Whatever the cause, a love of country life first found untrammelled scope under the protection of the Roman peace, when the boundaries of empire had been pushed back behind the Rhine, the Danube, and the Euphrates, and when the husbandman knew of wars and battles only from the gazette, or from the sight of regiments marching along the dusty highway to encounter barbarous foes in the forests of Germany or the deserts of the Sudan. It was then, and not till then, that we hear of country houses springing up in all the fairest regions of Italy. The rapturous love of Catullus for his home on the beautiful lake of Garda,[2] the joy of Cicero in the calm of his Tusculan villa on the Alban hills, and the delight of Horace in his farm among the Sabine mountains, are only the most familiar instances of a taste, we may almost say a passion, for rural life which seems to have been nearly universal among all Romans, rich or poor, who could

[1] Plato, *Phaedrus*, pp. 227-230.

[2] Catullus, xxxi.

afford to keep a house or a cottage in the country. Pliny, as we have seen, was no exception to the rule. He owned several villas, which he loved, on the lake of Como. But he had others much nearer to Rome to which he could retire without the fatigue and loss of time which the long journey to Como necessitated. Of two of these villas, one by the sea and the other at the foot of the Apennines, he has left us minute descriptions. A brief notice of each may help us to picture to ourselves the charm of a Roman noble's country house in the golden days of the Empire.

One of Pliny's favourite villas was situated on the coast of Latium, between Ostia and Laurentum, but much nearer to Laurentum.[1] The distance from Rome was only seventeen miles, so that after transacting his business in the city he could reach home before the day was far spent, in time to enjoy the evening breeze and see the sun setting in the sea. From the highways which led to Ostia and Laurentum two by-roads branched off at the eleventh and fourteenth milestone respectively, and both of them conducted the traveller to Pliny's house. Both roads were sandy, which made driving heavy and slow, but riding easy and pleasant. The scenery was varied. At one point the road ran between woods, which shut out the view; at another the country opened out and the eye wandered over a wide expanse of meadowland, where flocks of sheep browsed and herds of cattle and horses grazed in the vernal sunshine. But in the heat of summer the meadows were brown and deserted, the flocks and herds were away on the hills.

So close to the beach did the villa stand that the wall of one of the dining-rooms was gently washed by

[1] *Ep.* ii. 17.

the last ripple of the waves. From the windows or folding doors of this room you looked out to sea on three sides, while from the fourth side the view extended across an intervening courtyard and colonnades to the woods and the distant mountains. An adjoining parlour caught the first rays of the rising sun at one window, and kept the last lingering glow of the descending luminary at another. It, too, commanded a prospect of the ever-present sea; but standing farther back from the shore it was beyond the reach of the spray and less within the monotonous boom of the breakers. Here the projecting walls of two chambers formed on the outside of the house an angle exposed to the sun but sheltered from the winds—a calm and warm retreat on winter days, the heat of the sun's rays being increased by their reflection from the walls. Opening on this sunny nook was a library, where Pliny kept the works of his favourite authors: a great bow-window permitted the reader to bask in the sunshine from morning to night.

Everywhere the villa seems to have been so built as to catch as many sunbeams and to enjoy as many sea views as possible. Even the swimmers in the swimming-bath could look on the sea and almost fancy they were buffeting the billows; and close by was a tennis court, which lay open to the full heat of the afternoon sun. A tower contained on its upper floor a dining-room, where, seated at the windows, you could gaze far out to sea and far along the coast, a succession of beautiful villas adding to the amenity of the landscape. Yet another dining-room on the ground floor looked out on the garden: within its walls the hoarse roar of the waves swooned away into a soft and soothing murmur. The garden was thickly

planted with fig and mulberry trees: one walk led between hedges of box and rosemary, and another in the shade of trellised vines, where the turf was soft and easy to the tread, even if you walked barefoot. The views from the house on the garden, Pliny tells us, were not less pleasant than the views on the sea.

Skirting one side of the garden, and separating it from the beach, was a closed corridor or gallery with windows opening both on the garden and on the sea; but the windows on the sea were twice as many as the windows on the garden. On calm days all the windows were thrown open; but if the weather were blustery, the windows were shut on the side from which the wind blew. Beds of violets on a terrace outside infused their perfume into the gallery through the open windows. In winter the reflection of the sun's rays from the walls kept the temperature at a pleasant level; while in summer the wall of the gallery cast a shadow on the garden, where it tempered the heat, the length of the shadow dwindling or waxing as the day wore on to noon or declined to evening. At that season the gallery was coolest at the hottest part of the day, for then the sunbeams fell almost perpendicularly on the roof instead of streaming in at the windows. Then, too, the windows on both sides were flung open, and the refreshing breeze from the sea blew straight through, so that the air within was never sultry.

At the end of the terrace, with its beds of violets, and half-detached from the rest of the house, were several rooms which Pliny calls his favourites. Amongst them was his private cabinet or study, where, reclining on a couch, you could look out on the sea at one side, on the neighbouring villas at another, and on the woods at a third. A bedroom

opened off the cabinet. Cut off from the rest of the villa by walls and a passage, these apartments enjoyed perfect quiet and tranquillity: the sound of servants' voices never broke the silence: even the howling of the wind and the moaning of the sea hardly penetrated the stillness. Shutters and curtains excluded every ray of light, when the master desired to sleep sound and long. On retiring to these secluded apartments Pliny felt as if he had left even his villa far away; and they formed his favourite retreat at the time of the winter festival of the Saturnalia, when all the rest of the house rang with the merry voices of the slaves romping and enjoying their brief annual period of liberty. The master of the house refrained from intruding on the gambols of his servants, and their noisy revels did not disturb the repose of his study.

The adjoining coast offered a series of agreeable prospects, whether you took boat and sailed along it, or walked the shore, where the sand was compact and firm or loose and friable, according as it had been lately washed by a stormy sea or left high and dry during a long spell of calm weather. Fine villas, some close together, others divided by stretches of shore, added to the charm of this delightful coast. The most necessary articles were to be had at a neighbouring village: the woods furnished abundance of fuel; and all the conveniences of life could be procured from the large town of Ostia a few miles away.

As Pliny resorted to his Laurentine villa in winter as well as in summer, he took care to have it artificially warmed; and he has described the heating apparatus. Pipes laid under the floors conveyed the heat from a furnace throughout the house, and the hot air might be admitted directly into a room by a slit or aperture

in the floor, which could be opened or shut at pleasure. The swimming-bath was warmed as well as the apartments, so that the bather could plunge into it in any weather.[1]

The other villa of which Pliny has given us a minute description was situated in Tuscany ;[2] but as he has omitted to mention its distance from Rome and to describe the roads which led to it, we cannot identify the site. It seems to have been Pliny's favourite resort in summer ; for standing on high ground at the foot of the Apennines it enjoyed at that season a delicious climate, the heat being generally tempered by gentle breezes on days when the low pestilential coast of Tuscany was baking and sweltering in the fierce sunshine. But in winter the climate was cold ; myrtles and olives would not grow there, and though the laurel flourished, it was sometimes nipped by the frost. The surrounding scenery was very pleasing. Mountains crowned with venerable forests, where game abounded, rose like an amphitheatre on three sides of a vast expanse of level plain, their wooded skirts broken by a line of low hills whose fertile soil produced abundant, though late, harvests, while their slopes were clad with a long unbroken stretch of vineyards. Fruitful fields and flowery meadows, watered by perennial streams, filled and diversified the flats, where the Tiber flowed with a majestic and navigable current, except when the summer heat lowered the level of the river and exposed some part of its bed. The whole scene was so varied and charming that, viewing it from a height, you might fancy you were gazing on a lovely picture rather than on a work of nature.

Situated on a gentle rise at the foot of a hill, the

[1] *Ep.* ii. 17, sections 9, 11, 23. [2] *Ep.* v. 6.

villa commanded a wide prospect over the rich and beautiful champaign country spread out beneath it; while behind it at some distance lay the Apennines, from which even on the calmest summer day came wandering airs, not harsh and rude, but faint and languid as if weary with travelling so far. The house for the most part faced full south, and on its front a long colonnade received and seemed to invite the sunshine. It opened on a terrace, where the flower-beds were cut in a variety of shapes and edged with boxwood. From the terrace a sloping bank, adorned with bushes of boxwood clipped into the likeness of animals, descended to a lawn of soft and almost liquid acanthus; and round the lawn ran a walk bordered by evergreens trained or tortured in like manner into alien forms. Beyond it a broad drive encircled a low shrubbery; and the garden was then bounded by a stone wall, marked by box-trees rising in graduated ranks, one above the other, to the verdurous top. Outside the garden wall stretched the open country.

We need not follow Pliny in the detailed description which he gives of this his favourite Tuscan villa. Suffice it to say that according to their different aspects the windows commanded varied prospects of meadows, vineyards, and mountains, and received refreshing breezes from the Apennine valleys. In a court a fountain plashed in a marble basin with a pleasing and so to say cooling murmur on summer days, while the shade of spreading plane-trees screened the lounger from the hot rays of the sun. One of the rooms which opened on this court was adorned with a painted frieze of birds perched among branches, which vied in beauty with the veins of the polished marble slabs that incrusted the walls up to the cornice; while

a plane-tree, looking in at the window, lent its verdure and shade to the apartment, and a little fountain, playing in a basin, mingled its purl with the plashing of the larger fountain under the plane-trees in the courtyard. Pliny seems to have loved the soothing sound of falling water. He makes particular mention of a spacious apartment of which some windows looked out on the terrace and others on the meadows, while immediately under them was a fish-pond, into which water fell from a height, charming the ear with the tinkle and babble of its music, and delighting the eye by the sight of the seething foam and sparkling bubbles in the marble basin.

But in the grounds of the villa we must not pass over in silence a hippodrome or race-course, on which Pliny would seem to have especially prided himself; for he has dwelt on its picturesque features with a sort of fond affection. The course was completely surrounded by plane-trees, with ivy twining about their boles even to the summit and stretching its green arms from tree to tree, so as to weave them into a single verdant wall. Between the trunks of the planes grew box-trees, and on the outer side of this stately hedge rows of laurels mingled their greenery and shade with the greenery and shade of the planes. The end of the course had the shape of a semicircle, and here the plane-trees were replaced by cypresses, their thicker foliage and darker hue presenting to the eye a sombre and almost solemn aspect, which contrasted with the gaiety of the sunshine that flooded the race-course. Farther on, in the dappled shade, the path skirted beds of roses and box-trees clipped in many quaint forms; while marble benches were disposed at intervals for the repose of the weary or languid lounger,

each of them with a little fountain playing beside it and rills of water babbling hard by. Here, too, in the garden was an alcove of white marble, canopied by a mantling vine trained on four small columns of Carystian marble: over against it a jet of water rose into the air, to fall back into a marble basin, beside which on summer days Pliny would sometimes picnic, placing the heavier dishes on the margin of the basin and letting the lighter, in the shape of boats and birds, float on the water. Facing the alcove was a summer-house of lustrous marble with folding doors that opened on a green lawn, and with windows from which, in whatever direction you gazed, you saw nothing but verdure. Fast by was a little bower, also with windows on every side; but through them the light fell faint and dim, obscured by the trailing tendrils of a luxuriant vine that climbed all over the roof. Stretched there on a couch you might imagine yourself in a grove, except that, when the weather was wet, you only heard, but did not feel, the drip and patter of the rain.

We need not wonder that Pliny loved this beautiful retreat. He tells us that he preferred it to other villas which he owned at Tusculum, Tibur, and Praeneste, for there in Tuscany he could enjoy a deeper, a more untroubled repose. There he need never put on full dress: there no neighbours called at unseasonable hours to break in on his studies or his slumbers: there all was quiet and peaceful: there purer air and brighter skies contributed to the salubrity of the spot. Nowhere, he tells us, did he feel so vigorous in body and mind, nowhere else were his servants in better health; indeed, of the train of domestics whom he brought with him from the city, he had never lost one

at his Tuscan villa. The natives of the district were famous for their longevity: grandsires and great-grandsires were to be seen among the youth; and listening to their talk of the olden time you might fancy yourself born in another age.

Elsewhere[1] Pliny describes in answer to a friend the regular round of a summer day at his Tuscan villa. He usually woke with the sun or earlier, rarely later. But even after he had risen, the shutters of his chamber windows remained closed, as he found that the darkness and stillness of a summer morning were eminently favourable to meditation. After reflecting a while on any composition he might have on hand, he called for his secretary, and, the shutters being opened, he dictated to him what he had just been thinking of. About ten or eleven he walked on the terrace or in a covered gallery, according to the weather, and again meditated and dictated. A drive in a carriage followed, but in the course of it he still pursued his studies. A siesta ensued, then a walk; then he read aloud a Greek or Latin speech as much for the sake of his digestion as of his voice. After that he walked again, was anointed, took exercise, and bathed. At dinner, which he shared with his wife or a few friends, a book was read aloud; and after dinner there was acting or music. Then he walked with his household, among whom were some learned persons. Thus the evening passed in various conversation, and the longest day came to an end too soon. Sometimes, if he had lain abed in the morning or walked longer than usual, a ride on horseback was substituted for the carriage drive in order to gain time. The visits of friends from neighbouring towns filled up part of the

[1] *Ep.* ix. 36.

day, and in moments of weariness Pliny welcomed them as a relief from more serious and strenuous occupations. Occasionally he hunted in the woods, but never without a notebook, that he might write something even if he caught nothing, the fullness of his pages thus compensating for the emptiness of his bag. One day in the forest three fine boars fell into the net beside which he sat reading and writing in the shade.[1] As a landlord he had to give some time to his tenants, though never enough to satisfy them; and after listening with what patience he could command to their rustic complaints, he returned with fresh zest to his books and his studies.[2]

Thus with Pliny the years glided peacefully away in a happy round of alternate business and study, of society in the world's capital and of retirement in some of the fairest scenes of rural Italy. But twice the even and on the whole uneventful tenour of his life was broken by events which swept for a time the student's little bark from the quiet backwaters into the broad current of history. Without some notice of these episodes any account of him and his fortunes would be incomplete. One of them was a great natural convulsion: the other was a great moral revolution. One was the eruption of Vesuvius, which buried Herculaneum and Pompeii under a sea of lava and a heap of ashes: the other was the rise of Christianity in the East. We begin with the eruption of Vesuvius.

On the twenty-fourth day of August in the year A.D. 79 Pliny, his mother, and his uncle, the Elder Pliny, were together at Misenum, on the Bay of Naples, where his uncle was admiral of the imperial

[1] *Ep.* i. 6. As to the alternation of hunting and study at his Tuscan villa, compare v. 18.

[2] *Ep.* ix. 36.

fleet. It was about one o'clock in the afternoon. Pliny the Elder had lunched and was engaged as usual over his books, when his sister pointed out to him a remarkable cloud, of unusual shape and size, in the eastern sky. He at once called for his shoes and ascended a height to observe it. The cloud was rising from one of the mountains across the bay, but at the distance they could not make out from which of the mountains it was ascending. They afterwards learned that the mountain was Vesuvius. In outline the cloud resembled a pine-tree, shooting up to a great height as it were in a long stalk and then branching out in various directions: its colour kept changing, being now white, now dusky, now mottled, according to the nature of the ashes or cinders with which it was charged. The interest of the naturalist was excited by the strange spectacle and he resolved to investigate it more closely. It is to be remembered that the eruption of Vesuvius which he was now witnessing was the first recorded in history: within the memory of man the mountain had always been an extinct volcano: there was little or nothing in its peaceful aspect and vine-clad slopes to warn the dwellers by that smiling sea of the fearful forces that were slumbering under their feet.

The admiral ordered a light vessel to be got ready, and offered to allow his nephew to accompany him. But his nephew answered that he preferred to study, so his uncle went alone. Just as he was leaving the house a letter was handed to him from a friend whose house was situated so near Vesuvius that there was no escape from it except by sea. The letter was written in great alarm and entreated Pliny to hasten to the rescue. In Pliny's mind the motive of humanity thus

reinforced the motive of curiosity, and he ordered the pilot to steer straight for the burning mountain, though already the fugitives were streaming away from the doomed cities. The admiral kept so cool that he calmly observed the shifting shapes of the vast and menacing cloud which by this time was spreading over the sky, and he dictated his observations to his secretary. But now the ashes were falling on the deck ever thicker and hotter as they drew near the scene of danger, and with the ashes were mingled pumice-stones and cinders scorched, cracked, and blackened by the volcanic fires. In the sea, too, they met with shoals where till lately there had been deep water, and it was difficult to make the land by reason of the avalanches, if we may call them so, from the crumbling mountain. The pilot implored Pliny to turn back. He hesitated a moment, then saying, "Fortune favours the brave," he bade them lay a straight course for Stabiae on the other side of the bay, where was his friend's villa. Here he landed and found his friend preparing for flight. He had embarked his baggage; but the same wind which had brought Pliny to him prevented him from putting to sea. It was necessary to wait till the wind should change. Pliny cheered and encouraged his dejected companions; and affecting an ease which he did not feel, he took a bath and then sat down to dinner, conversing gaily or at least with an assumption of gaiety.

Meantime night had fallen, but the darkness was lit up by huge sheets of flame that burst from Vesuvius in several places, flashing out in the gloom with a momentary and sinister splendour. To soothe the apprehensions of the rest, Pliny professed to believe that these lurid lights came from the fires of blazing

villages deserted by the peasantry ; and the wind still continuing contrary, he betook him to rest and slept soundly, for those who listened at the door could hear his stertorous breathing. No one else in the house closed an eye that night. But now the courtyard on which his bedroom opened was being choked with falling ashes and pumice-stones ; and if they delayed, their retreat might be cut off. So they woke him, and together they consulted what to do, whether to remain in the house or to seek safety, if safety could be found, in the open under the pelting shower of volcanic hail. By this time the earth was so shaken by violent and repeated shocks that the walls of the house rocked to and fro and nodded to their fall ; and in the open the pumice-stones were descending in showers. But they decided that the danger from the sky was less than the danger of being buried in the ruins of the house ; so, tying pillows to their heads to protect them against the rain of pumice, they issued forth.

Day had now broken elsewhere, but around the forlorn wanderers darkness reigned blacker and thicker than any ordinary night, except when the murky gloom was momentarily illumined by the fitful flare of the volcanic fires. They made their way to the shore, only to find the sea still wild and the wind still contrary. Pliny's strength, though not his courage, now began to fail. He lay down on a sail, which they found on the beach, and repeatedly called for water, which he drank. But the flames were now fast approaching, heralded by the smell of sulphur. It was necessary to hurry away. He rose, and leaning on two slaves struggled forward. But he immediately fell down. There the others left him. Two days afterwards, when the blackness of darkness at last

cleared away, his body was found uninjured and clad as in life : he lay like a sleeper taking his rest and not like a dead man.[1]

Meantime his sister and her son, the Younger Pliny, remained at Misenum. After the departure of his uncle, Pliny continued his studies, and having dined he retired to rest. But his sleep was short and broken. For many days previously tremors of earthquake had been felt, but being common in Campania they were little heeded. That night, however, they increased so alarmingly that it seemed as if the whole house were tumbling down. His mother burst into his room just at the moment when he was about to rise to wake her. Together they sat down in the courtyard at a little distance from the sea. Pliny called for a book of Livy and began to read and make extracts. He was interrupted by a Spanish friend of his uncle, who, finding the two seated and Pliny busy with his book, upbraided them with their cool indifference to the danger. But Pliny paid no heed to him and went on with his studies.

It was now about six o'clock in the morning ; but the light was still dim and languid. By this time the surrounding edifices were shaking ; delay might be fatal, so they resolved to quit the town. A crowd of terror-stricken fugitives followed at their heels. On getting clear of the buildings they halted, and strange sights met their eyes. For though the ground was a dead flat, the coaches which they had ordered out were slipping and sliding to and fro and could not be steadied even by stones placed under the wheels. The sea, too, had retreated, sucked back as it were by the

[1] *Ep.* vi. 16. Martial has an epigram (iv. 44) on the eruption, in which the luxuriant fertility of Vesuvius before the catastrophe is contrasted with its desolation afterwards.

earthquake, and the refluent waters had left many fish and marine creatures exposed on the sands. On the other hand loomed a black and dreadful cloud, shot with forked flames like flashes of lightning, but on a far vaster scale. Soon the cloud began to descend and envelop like a pall both land and sea. The island of Capri was blotted out ; even the headland of Misenum vanished in the darkness.

His mother entreated Pliny to leave her and to escape for his life, while there was still time ; but he refused to desert her, and taking each other by the arm they pressed on together. The ashes now began to fall about them, and at their heels pressed the encroaching darkness, which spread like a rolling torrent over the land. " Let us turn aside ", he said to her, " while we can still see, lest we be trampled to death by the crowd in the darkness." Hardly had they sat down, when the darkness overtook them, not like the darkness of a clouded and moonless night, but like the darkness of a room where the windows are shuttered and the lights put out. All around might now be heard the shrieks of women, the wailing of infants, and the shouts of men. Some were calling for their parents, others for their children, others were answering to the call ; some were lamenting their own plight, others the plight of their friends ; some in an agony of fear prayed for death. Many lifted up imploring hands to the gods, while not a few cried that the gods existed no longer, and that the last, the eternal night was come upon the world.

At last there was a gleam of light, but not the light of day ; it was the glimmer of approaching flames. However, the flames halted, the light faded, darkness again fell. Then ashes descended thick and heavy.

Again and again the mother and son rose and shook off the cinders which threatened to bury, if not to crush, them under their weight. After a while the darkness lifted and melted as it were into smoke and mist. Daylight followed, and the sun shone through the haze, but dim and lurid as in an eclipse. A changed world now met the eyes of the forlorn survivors; for the whole landscape was buried under deep ashes and cinders as under a sheet of snow. Pliny and his mother returned to Misenum, and after partaking of refreshments passed an anxious night between hope and fear. But fear still predominated; for the shocks of earthquake continued, and many people, driven crazy by wild predictions, added the terrors of imagination to the real horrors by which they were encompassed.[1]

Such was the great eruption of Vesuvius, as it was witnessed and described by Pliny the Younger. We now pass to the last and the saddest scene of his life; for it is melancholy to have to record that the humane and amiable Pliny was one of the earliest persecutors of the Christians. Appointed by his friend the emperor Trajan to the governorship of Bithynia, in Asia Minor, he found that the new religion was making rapid progress. The contagion of the superstition, as he calls it, had spread not only through the cities but through the villages and the country districts; the temples were being deserted, the rites of religion neglected, the sale of victims for sacrifice almost stopped. The suspected criminals were haled before the governor and questioned by him. If they denied that they were Christians and proved it to the governor's satisfaction by repeating after him a prayer to the

[1] *Ep.* vi. 20.

gods, by offering wine and incense to the emperor's statue, and by cursing Christ, he set them at liberty. If they confessed and refused to do any of these things, he ordered them to execution; those who were Roman citizens he remanded to Rome for trial and punishment. As to their practices, all he could elicit from them was that they were wont on a certain day to meet before dawn, to sing or recite a hymn in alternate verses to Christ as a god, and to bind themselves by a solemn oath, not to the perpetration of any crime, but never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery, never to break their plighted word, never to deny a deposit committed to their honour. That done, they dispersed, but met again to partake of food together, a plain and innocent repast; but even that custom they had intermitted since the publication of the governor's edict directed against political associations. Such was the sum of what Pliny calls their guilt or error, and such the offence which he visited with condign punishment. To make sure of the facts he examined two deaconesses under torture; but the rack could wring from them nothing more than a profession of what he describes as a depraved and extravagant superstition.[1]

The persecutor appears not to have long survived his victims. In his last letter, written to Trajan from Bithynia, Pliny excuses himself to the emperor for having allowed his wife to travel home by the imperial post in order to comfort her aunt in Italy on the death of her father.[2] As no subsequent letter of his has come down to us, and there is no mention of him afterwards in history, it seems probable that he died in his distant province, far from his native Como and from

[1] *Ep.* x. 96. [2] *Ep.* x. 120.

Rome, the scene of his mature activity. But we may hope that his ashes were brought home to rest in Italian earth, and were laid somewhere near the beautiful lake he knew and loved so well, within sight of the familiar mountains and within sound of the familiar waters lapping on the shore. *Requiescat in pace.*

II

LONDON LIFE IN THE TIME OF ADDISON[1]

In the foregoing pages I endeavoured to give my readers some sketches of life at Rome and in Italy about the beginning of the second century of our era. I now invite their attention to London life in the early years of the eighteenth century. And as in my first essay I drew my materials mainly from the letters of Pliny, so in this essay I propose to draw them chiefly from the essays of Addison.

Joseph Addison was born on the 1st of May 1672, and died on the 17th of June 1719. Thus he lived through the last thirteen years of Charles the Second, the whole of the reigns of James the Second, William the Third, and Anne, and the first five years of George the First. But his memory is chiefly associated with the age of Queen Anne, because that period coincided with the maturity of his genius and witnessed the production of the writings on which his fame securely rests. These writings comprise above all the essays contributed by him to the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, which ran successively, with breaks of about twenty months, from the 12th of April 1709 to the 20th of

[1] In an abridged form this essay was read as a lecture at the Royal Institution in London on June 7, 1921, and afterwards published in the *Quarterly Review*, vol. ccxxxvii. (1922).

December 1714. Thus the time with which we shall be mainly concerned in the following pages includes, roughly speaking, the last six years of the reign of Queen Anne.[1]

As my readers are doubtless aware, the *Spectator* of Queen Anne's time, which published the masterpieces of Addison and many fine papers by his friend Sir Richard Steele, was not a newspaper in the ordinary sense of the word; for it did not attempt to report the current events of the day, and all political discussions, whether of home or foreign affairs, were rigorously excluded. The aim of the writers was to improve the taste and reform the manners and morals of their readers, and they believed that they could better attain their purpose by maintaining a strict neutrality in politics than by plunging into the troubled and angry sea of partisan controversy. But in the essays on social, moral, and literary topics, which formed the whole of the *Spectator* and the chief part of the *Tatler*, the essayists could not wholly abstain from alluding, often in a playful vein, to the public topics which engaged so much of the attention of their contemporaries; and we their successors should but imperfectly understand the life of London in those days if we forgot entirely the great events which were then occurring and the momentous issues which were then being decided in Europe.

While the whole of the *Tatler* and the greater part of the *Spectator* were appearing, the long war with France was still dragging out its weary length to a

[1] The *Tatler* ran from the 12th of April 1709 to the 2nd of January 1711. The *Spectator* ran from the 1st of March 1711 to the 6th of December 1712; but after being intermitted for about eighteen months it was resumed on the 18th of June 1714 and ran till the 20th of December 1714. Queen Anne died on the 1st of August 1714.

somewhat indecisive and inglorious close, and Addison makes frequent references to it. He says that news of the war were cried through London with the same precipitation as a fire; that a bloody battle alarmed the town from one end to another in an instant; and that every motion of the French was published in so great a hurry that you might think the enemy were at the gates.[1] News of a great victory were proclaimed to the whole city by the roar of guns from the Tower.[2] In one of his papers Addison professes to have been appropriately awakened from a dream of Fame by the noise of the cannon fired for the taking of Mons.[3] As the ports of France were necessarily closed to English traffic during the war, news of military operations in Flanders and Germany reached England only by the mail from Holland; hence the conspicuous place which the Dutch mail takes in the periodical literature of that age. And as the packet-boat came from the east, and it was long before the invention of steamers, the mail could not arrive so long as the wind sat in the west; accordingly we read that a westerly wind kept the whole town in suspense and put a stop to conversation.[4] Many empty-pated people, says Addison, "do not know what to talk of till about twelve o'clock in the morning; for by that time they are pretty good judges of the weather, know which way the wind sits, and whether the Dutch mail be come in".[5] He tells us of a very grave person, an upholsterer, who ran about the town after the news to the neglect of his family and the ruin of his shop;

[1] *Spectator*, No. 251.
[2] *Spectator*, No. 165.
[3] *Tatler*, No. 81. This paper was published on the 15th of October 1709. Hence Smollett is inaccurate in saying that Mons capitulated "about the end of October" 1709 (*History of England*, vol. ii. p. 169, Edinburgh, 1810).
[4] *Spectator*, No. 452.
[5] *Spectator*, No. 10.

he always "looked extremely thin in a dearth of news, and never enjoyed himself in a westerly wind".[1]

But the supply of war news fluctuated, not only with the state of the wind, but also with the time of year. For in that easy-going age armies regularly retired in the autumn into winter quarters, from which they came forth, refreshed and invigorated, to resume the business of mutual slaughter in spring. Accordingly a writer who earned his bread by glutting the appetite of the public for sanguinary intelligence was sore put to it to make ends meet during the close season, when little or no blood was flowing. Addison tells of an author who from the beginning of November to the opening of the campaign made shift to live by writing pamphlets and letters to members of parliament or friends in the country; but sometimes he would entertain his ordinary readers with a murder, or pay his weekly bills with the help of strange and lamentable accidents. A little before the armies took the field, his way was to rouse the attention of the public by the report of a prodigy, and if it was tolerably written, it would bring him in two guineas at the lowest price. This prepared his readers for great and bloody news from Flanders in June and July. He always looked well after a battle, and seemed fatter in a fighting year. Happily for himself poor Tom, for that was his name, died before the conclusion of peace, for the cessation of carnage would have taken the bread out of his mouth.[2]

Of the newspapers which reported the course of the campaigns Addison mentions particularly the *Daily Courant*, the *English Post*, the *Post-boy*, the *Postman*,

[1] *Tatler*, No. 155. As to the effect of a westerly wind on the newspapers, see also *Tatler*, No. 42.

[2] *Tatler*, No. 101.

and the *Supplement*; and he says that the political upholsterer spent much time in attempting to reconcile their conflicting reports, when he had much better have been attending to his shop.[1] While the *Spectator* was in course of publication, the Government imposed a tax on paper. This was a heavy blow to the newspapers of the day.[2] The Act of Parliament which imposed the tax was known as the Stamp Act. It was to come into force on the 1st of August 1712; and on the 31st of July, the last day of untaxed newspapers, Addison wrote in the *Spectator* as follows: "This is the day on which many eminent authors will probably publish their last words. I am afraid that few of our weekly historians, who are men that above all others delight in war, will be able to subsist under the weight of a stamp and an approaching peace. A sheet of blank paper that must have this new imprimatur clapt upon it, before it is qualified to communicate anything to the public, will make its way in the world but very heavily. In short, the necessity of carrying a stamp, and the improbability of notifying a bloody battle, will, I am afraid, both concur to the sinking of those thin folios, which have every other day retailed to us the history of Europe for several years last past. A facetious friend of mine, who loves a pun, calls this present mortality among authors, 'the fall of the leaf'." [3]

These melancholy anticipations were fulfilled. Writing to Stella only five days later Swift says: "Do you know that all Grub Street is dead and gone last week? No more ghosts or murders now for love or money. . . . Every single half sheet pays a halfpenny to the Queen. The *Observator* is fallen; the

[1] *Tatler*, No. 155. [2] *Spectator*, No. 445. [3] *Spectator*, No. 445.

Medleys are jumbled together with the *Flying Post*; the *Examiner* is deadly sick; the *Spectator* keeps on and doubles its price: I know not how long it will last."[1] In consequence of the tax the price of the *Spectator* was raised from one penny to twopence; and the increased cost brought the editors a flood of letters of complaint. One gentleman informed them that he was now deprived of the best part of his breakfast, for since the imposition of the second penny he had been forced every morning to drink his dish of coffee by itself, without the addition of the *Spectator* that used to be better than lace to it. One letter came from a soap-boiler, whose business appears to have suffered from the tax. He wrote in very affectionate terms to the *Spectator* condoling with him on the necessity they both lay under of setting a higher price on their wares and begging the editor, when he next touched on the painful subject, to speak a word or two upon the present duties on Castle soap. Letters from the female world also came in shoals. A large family of daughters drew up a very handsome remonstrance, in which they mentioned, that their father having refused to take in the *Spectator*, since the additional price was set on it, they offered him unanimously to bate him the article of bread and butter in the tea-table account, provided the *Spectator* might be served up to them every morning as usual. To his credit their father, moved by their desire to improve themselves, granted them the continuance both of the *Spectator* and of their bread and butter, giving particular orders that the tea-table should be set forth every morning with its customary bill of fare, and without any manner of defalcation.[2]

[1] Quoted by H. Morley, in *Spectator*, No. 445. [2] *Spectator*, No. 488.

In an early number of the *Spectator* Addison congratulates himself and his colleagues on the success of the paper. He says that three thousand copies were distributed every day ; so that allowing twenty readers to every copy he reckoned on about sixty thousand daily disciples in the cities of London and Westminster, and he hoped that they would distinguish themselves from the thoughtless herd of their ignorant and unattentive brethren. As Socrates was said to have brought philosophy down from heaven to dwell among men, so, Addison tells us, it was his ambition to bring philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses.[1]

The *Spectator* was a morning paper, served up with the tea or coffee on the breakfast table. But the approaching peace with France filled many readers of newspapers with dismay, because it threatened to dry up the great fountain of news, which was the war. To console them in some measure under this gloomy prospect Addison playfully proposed to start an evening newspaper, which should report all the most remarkable occurrences in every little town, village, and hamlet that lay within ten miles of London, or in other words, within the verge of the penny post. So far as I am aware, this was the first proposal ever made for the institution of a daily evening newspaper in London, and though it was not put forward seriously, it is of interest, because it illustrates the extent of the city in Addison's time, when many places, which have since been absorbed in the metropolis, were still separated from it by fields and meadows. The paper was to be issued every night at nine o'clock precisely.

[1] *Spectator*, No. 10.

A specimen number contained the following items of intelligence :

" By my last advices from Knightsbridge I hear that a horse was clapped into the pound on the third instant, and that he was not released when the letters came away.

" We are informed from Pankridge,[1] that a dozen weddings were lately celebrated in the mother-church of that place, but are referred to their next letters for the names of the parties concerned.

" Letters from Brompton advise, that the widow Blight had received several visits from John Mildew, which affords great matter of speculation in those parts.

" By a fisherman which lately touched at Hammersmith, there is advice from Putney, that a certain person, well known in that place, is like to lose his election for churchwarden ; but this being boat-news, we cannot give entire credit to it.

" Letters from Paddington bring little more than that William Squeak, the sow-gelder, passed through that place the fifth instant.

" They advise from Fulham, that things remained there in the same state they were. They had intelligence, just as the letters came away, of a tub of excellent ale just set a-broach at Parsons Green ; but this wanted confirmation." [2]

This last intelligence from Parsons Green was certainly cheering ; but whether the other items of news from Pankridge and the rest were likely to atone for the dearth of victories in Flanders may perhaps be doubted.

The places where in Addison's time people met to

[1] Pancras. [2] *Spectator*, No. 452.

discuss the news were the clubs and especially the coffee-houses. Never was the drinking of coffee more fashionable than in his day. The custom was then of comparatively recent origin. While John Evelyn was a fellow-commoner at Balliol College, Oxford, where he was admitted on the 10th of May 1637, he saw coffee drunk for the first time by a certain Greek named Nathaniel Conopios, who had been sent on a mission from Greece by Cyril, the Patriarch of Constantinople. Evelyn has recorded that the practice of drinking coffee was not introduced into England until thirty years afterwards; that is, it came into vogue under Charles the Second, about 1667;[1] and as Evelyn lived into the reign of Queen Anne, he witnessed the whole growth of the fashion.

Many coffee-houses are mentioned in the *Spectator*. They differed not only in situation but in the class of persons who frequented them, some being the favourite haunts of politicians, others of authors, others of men of fashion, and so forth. The most famous of all was Will's, which had been known successively as the Red Cow and the Rose before it took its permanent name from William Urwin, who kept it. It was the corner house on the north side of Russell Street, at the end of Bow Street, in Covent Garden.[2] The coffee-house owed its reputation to Dryden, who used it habitually, gathering the wits of London about him and holding forth on literary topics in his later years with the authority of an acknowledged master. He spent his mornings in writing, dined at home, and then repaired to Will's, from which he did not return till night, though he is said to have kept earlier hours than

[1] John Evelyn, *Diary*, under May 10, 1637 (vol. i. p. 14, New Edition, London, 1827).

[2] Joseph Spence, *Anecdotes* (London, 1820), p. 263; H. Morley, on *Spectator*, No. 1.

Addison.[1] At the coffee-house he had a special arm-chair, which in winter was placed by the fire, but in summer was set in the balcony: he called the two places his winter and summer seat. The company met on the first floor, from which the balcony opened. They did not sit in separate boxes or compartments, but at tables dispersed through the room. The young beaux and wits did not presume to approach the principal table, and they thought it a great honour to be allowed to take a pinch of snuff out of Dryden's snuff-box.[2] It was when he was passing through Rose Street, in Covent Garden, on his way from Will's to his home in Gerrard Street, that Dryden was waylaid and beaten by a gang of ruffians whom the malignant and cowardly Rochester had hired to assault him;[3] and it was no doubt at Will's coffee-house that Pope, as a boy of twelve, was taken to see the veteran poet in his chair of honour.[4]

Thus Will's coffee-house became and long remained the chosen resort of men of letters. The papers in the *Tatler* which deal with poetry and the drama are regularly dated from it.[5] It was at Will's coffee-house that Addison, in the assumed character of Isaac Bickerstaff, professes to have held his delightful conversation with Ned Softly, when the critic, under pretence of praising, contrived politely to ridicule the namby-pamby verses of the poetaster.[6] In another paper, contributed to the *Tatler*, the satirist directs the shafts of his wit and sarcasm against the pretentious

[1] J. Spence, *Anecdotes*, p. 286.

[2] J. Spence, *Anecdotes*, p. 263.

[3] Sir Walter Scott, "Life of John Dryden", in his edition of Dryden's *Works*, vol. i. (London, 1808) pp. 203 *sq*. Dryden's house was in Gerrard Street, the fifth on the left hand as you came from Little Newport Street. The rooms looked into the gardens of Leicester House. Dryden generally wrote in a room on the ground floor looking on the street. See J. Spence, *Anecdotes*, pp. 260 *sq*.

[4] J. Spence, *Anecdotes*, p. 332.

[5] *Tatler*, No. 1.

[6] *Tatler*, No. 163.

but shallow and ignorant critics, who were masters of a set of catchwords, such as Unity, Style, Fire, Phlegm, Easy, Natural, Turn, Sentiment, and the like; who formed their judgement of Homer, Horace, and Virgil, not from the works of the poets, but from the writings of Rapin and Bossu; who shook their heads at the pedantry of universities, and burst into laughter when you mentioned an author who was known at Will's.[1] The Templar, who figured as the chief literary critic of the imaginary Spectator Club, made a show of studying the law to please his father, but devoted most of his time to books and the theatre: the hour of the play was his hour of business: exactly at five o'clock every day he passed through New Inn, crossed through Russell Court, and took a turn at Will's till the play began.[2] When false news of the death of Louis XIV. arrived in London and set all the coffee-house politicians in a buzz, Addison professes to have called in at Will's and to have found that the discourse of the critics and coffee-drinkers had wandered from the death of the French king to that of Monsieur Boileau, Monsieur Racine, and Monsieur Corneille, and several other poets, whom they regretted as persons who would have obliged the world with very noble elegies on the death of so great a prince and so eminent a patron of learning.[3] However, we gather that at Will's the passion for literature was occasionally tempered by attention to politics; for the imaginary Spectator speaks of thrusting his head into a knot of politicians at Will's and listening attentively to the narratives which went the round in these little circular audiences.[4] From another reference of Addison's to

[1] *Tatler*, No. 165.
[2] *Spectator*, No. 2.
[3] *Spectator*, No. 403.
[4] *Spectator*, No. 1.

Will's we learn with regret that piety was not conspicuous among the virtues of the wits who frequented this popular place of resort. When Isaac Bickerstaff, in order to test the state of religious opinion in London, had constructed an ecclesiastical thermometer, which indicated the degrees of zeal for religion by the height at which the fluid stood in the glass, he went the round of the coffee-houses with this valuable instrument in his pocket ; and when he came to Will's, he was surprised and pained to observe that the fluid sank to the lowest mark in the tube.[1]

One of the coffee-houses most frequented by politicians in those days seems to have been the St. James's. It was the last house but one at the south-west corner of St. James's Street, where it stood down to 1806.[2] When the rumour of the French king's death was afloat, and the Spectator desired to ascertain the truth of it, he began, he tells us, as near the fountainhead as possible by looking in at the St. James's, where he found the whole outer room in a buzz of politics. The speculations were very indifferent towards the door, but improved in quality as you approached the steam of the coffee-pot in the inner room, where he heard the whole Spanish monarchy disposed of, and all the line of the Bourbons provided for, in less than a quarter of an hour.[3] Pursuing his inquiries towards the city he came to Jenny Man's coffee-house, which seems to have been situated somewhere between St. James's Street and Charing Cross. There he saw a brisk young fellow who cocked his hat on a friend and addressed him as follows : " Well, Jack, the old prig is dead at last. Sharp's the word.

[1] *Tatler*, No. 220.

[2] H. Morley, on *Spectator*, No. 1.

[3] *Spectator*, No. 403.

Now or never, boy. Up to the walls of Paris directly," with other deep reflections of the same nature.

By the time that the Spectator, still following up the scent, had penetrated into the heart of the city, he discovered that the views of coffee-house politicians were to some extent coloured by their professional occupations. In Fish Street, where the coffee-houses seem to have chiefly depended on the patronage of fishmongers, he heard a leading politician discoursing on the plentiful supply of mackerel which might be expected to flow as a natural consequence from the French king's death ; since English fishermen would not have to fear the raids of French privateers on their boats and nets. The orator then considered the death of Louis XIV. in its bearing on the catch of pilchards, and by his remarks on that subject infused a general joy into the whole audience. Proceeding still eastward the Spectator came to Cheapside, where he heard a haberdasher addressing a circle of admirers in a coffee-house of which he was the most shining ornament. The speaker called several of his hearers to witness that he had given up the king of France for dead more than a week ago, indeed that the thing was so certain that it was impossible it could be otherwise. He was in the act of deducing the political lessons to be drawn from the monarch's decease, when his speech was interrupted and his reputation as a political oracle was dashed to the ground, by the arrival of a gentleman from Garraway's, who informed the audience that according to the latest letters from France the French king was in good health and had gone out hunting the very morning the post came away. On hearing this intelligence the crestfallen haberdasher

stole his hat from the peg beside him and retired to his shop in great confusion.[1]

Another house in which the Spectator often showed himself was the Cocoa-Tree.[2] This was a chocolate-house in St. James's Street, frequented by Tory statesmen and dandies as exclusively as the St. James's coffee-house in the same street was patronized by Whig politicians and Whig exquisites. From this distinction a speculative philosopher might perhaps deduce a secret affinity between chocolate and Toryism on the one hand and between coffee and Whiggery on the other.

Another notable coffee-house in the reign of Queen Anne was the Grecian,[3] in Devereux Court, off the Strand. It took its name from a certain Constantine, a Greek, who kept it. Being close to the Temple it was a favourite resort of lawyers.[4] Students of the law used to lounge into it about eight o'clock in the morning, attired in gay caps and slippers and flaunting piebald dressing-gowns with strawberry-coloured sashes; and here they sipped their coffee till it was time to take coach for Westminster Hall.[5] The Greek spoken by the coffee-house keeper attracted the custom of learned men and Fellows of the Royal Society. It is said that once two friends quarrelled here so bitterly over a Greek accent that they went out into Devereux Court and fought a duel, in which one of them was killed on the spot.[6] The reputation of the coffee-house for scholarship stood so high that in the opening number of the *Tatler* Steele announced that all the

[1] *Spectator*, No. 403.
[2] *Spectator*, No. 1.
[3] *Tatler*, No. 1; *Spectator*, Nos. 1, 49.
[4] H. Morley, on *Spectator*, No. 1.
[5] *Spectator*, No. 49. As to the coaches in which the lawyers drove to Westminster Hall, see *Spectator*, No. 21.
[6] H. Morley, on *Spectator*, No. 1.

essays dealing with points of learning would be dated from the Grecian.[1] It is melancholy to learn that the piety of those who frequented the Grecian was by no means on a level with their erudition. When the ecclesiastical thermometer was introduced into the coffee-house, the liquid in the tube marked only one degree above zero.[2]

The coffee-house to which Addison himself chiefly resorted was Button's. It took its name from an old servant of Addison's, and was situated opposite Will's in Russell Street, Covent Garden.[3] Addison's practice was to breakfast with one or two friends at his lodgings in St. James's Place, then study all the morning, meet his party at Button's, dine there, and remain five or six hours at the coffee-house, sometimes till far into the night. Pope was one of the company for about a year; but he found the long hours, and perhaps the deep potations, too much for his feeble health, and he was obliged to retire from the social group.[4] As might have been anticipated in a coffee-house patronized by Addison, the political principles at Button's were of the Whig cast. When the Spectator, abandoning his old habit of taciturnity, set himself to cultivate the art of loquacity, he frequented coffee-houses for the sake of wrangling with the people he met there; and for that purpose he took care never to be of the same opinion with the man he addressed; hence he professed himself a Tory at Button's and a Whig at Child's,[5] which was a coffee-house in St. Paul's Churchyard, much resorted to by the clergy[6] and naturally distinguished by its religious zeal.[7]

[1] *Tatler*, No. 1. Compare *Tatler*, Nos. 6, 31, 35, 39, 43, 47.
[2] *Tatler*, No. 220.
[3] J. Spence, *Anecdotes*, p. 263. Compare the *Guardian*, Nos. 71 and 98.
[4] J. Spence, *Anecdotes*, pp. 196, 286.
[5] *Spectator*, No. 556.
[6] H. Morley, on *Spectator*, No. 1.
[7] *Tatler*, No. 220.

Next to the coffee-houses, if not on an equality with them, as places of popular resort in the reign of Queen Anne were the clubs. Many clubs are described or alluded to in the pages of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, but only some of these were real, while others, to all appearance, were purely imaginary. Among the real clubs mentioned by Addison are the Kit-cat, the Beef-steak, and the October.[1] The Kit-cat Club met at a famous mutton-pie house in Shire Lane, by Temple Bar. It took its name, not, as might naturally be supposed, from the noble animals which provided the contents of the pies, but from a pastry-cook named Christopher Katt, who kept the house, and after whom the pies were called Kit-cats. The club originated in the hospitality of Jacob Tonson, the bookseller, who here entertained a number of writers every week. About the year 1700 this weekly assembly of authors blossomed into a literary and political club of Whig principles with Tonson for its secretary. Here the great Whig chiefs, such as Halifax and Somers, met the foremost Whig writers, such as Congreve, Addison, Garth, and Steele. Among the members were Dryden and Vanbrugh ; and great noblemen like the Dukes of Marlborough, Devonshire, Somerset, Richmond, and Grafton. Pope and Gay sometimes visited the club, and on one occasion drank the health of Swift, who had set up a rival club called the *Society of Brothers* as an antidote to the poisonous Whig principles of the Kit-cat. In summer the meetings of the club were sometimes held at the Upper Flask on Hampstead Heath. Every member presented to the club his portrait painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller, who was himself a member of the club ; and afterwards Tonson

[1] *Spectator*, Nos. 9, 72.

hung the portraits in a room of his villa at Barnes Elms in Surrey.[1] The October Club was the Tory rival of the Kit-cat. It met at the Bell Tavern in King Street, Westminster, and drank to the confusion of the Whigs in October ale, which gave its name to the club. The portrait of Queen Anne, which used to adorn the club-room, is said to be now in the Town Council-chamber at Salisbury. The Beef-steak Club met in a tavern in Old Jewry; it was catered for by the actor Dick Estcourt, who wore a small gold gridiron as his badge of office.[2]

Among the clubs mentioned by Addison which are hardly less illustrative of the manners of the age because their historical existence is more than doubtful, we may note the Club of Duellists, which, he tells us, was founded in the reign of King Charles the Second. None might be admitted to the club who had not fought his man. The president was said to have killed half-a-dozen in single combat; and as for the other members, they took their seats according to the number of their slain. There was likewise a side-table for such as had only drawn blood, and shown a laudable ambition for taking the first opportunity to qualify themselves for sitting among the homicides at the principal table. This club, consisting only of men of honour, came to an untimely end, most of the members being put to the sword, or hanged, soon after its institution.[3]

Again, Addison tells us that he knew of a market-town in which two rival clubs, composed of fat men and lean men respectively, tore the corporation in pieces by their factions, until they agreed to elect two bailiffs

[1] J. Spence, *Anecdotes*, pp. 337 *sq.*; H. Morley and G. Gregory Smith, on *Spectator*, No. 9.

[2] G. Gregory Smith and H. Morley, on *Spectator*, No. 9.

[3] *Spectator*, No. 9.

annually out of the two clubs; by which means the principal magistrates were coupled like rabbits, one fat and one lean. The Fat Club numbered only fifteen members, but weighed over three ton. The qualification for membership was to stick fast in an ordinary doorway in the attempt to force an entrance into the club-room.[1]

The Everlasting Club, if we may trust Addison's account of it, consisted of a hundred members, who divided the whole twenty-four hours among them in such a manner that the club sat day and night, from one end of the year to the other, no party presuming to rise till they were relieved by their successors. In this way a member of the Everlasting Club never lacked company; for though he might not himself be on duty, he was sure to find some who were; so that whenever he felt disposed to take a whet, a morning or evening draught, or a bottle after midnight, he had nothing to do but to turn in at the club and discover a knot of friends to his mind. The club was founded during the Civil Wars and continued its sittings day and night, till the Great Fire of London burned the club-house over their ears and compelled them to suspend their sittings for a short time. The steward of the club almost fell a martyr to duty; for he awaited the approach of the flames with a calmness not less than heroic, refusing to quit his chair until he had received positive and repeated orders from the club to retire, and even then he did not beat a retreat until he had emptied every bottle on the table.[2]

Addison has also commemorated a remarkable club of widows, though we cannot be sure that all the particulars which he gives of it are strictly historical.

[1] *Spectator*, No. 9. [2] *Spectator*, No. 72.

The club consisted of nine experienced dames who met once a week round a large oval table. The president had disposed of six husbands and was just about to grapple with a seventh. Another had married within a fortnight of the death of her last husband but one; her weeds had served her thrice, and were still as good as new. A third member had been a widow at eighteen, and had since buried a second husband and two coachmen. A fourth had been married in her fifteenth year to a gentleman aged threescore and twelve, by whom she had twins nine months after his decease. In the fifty-fifth year of her age she married James Spindle, Esq., a youth of one-and-twenty, who did not outlive the honeymoon. On the first institution of the club it was resolved that the members should give pictures of their deceased husbands to the club-room; but two of them bringing in their dead at full length, they covered all the walls; upon which the rule was amended so as to run, that each widow should give her own portrait set round with her husbands in miniature. The conversation of the ladies at the table turned largely on the question of how to manage a husband. Among the first principles, on which they unanimously agreed, was not to give him his head at first, and never to be thoroughly convinced of his affection till he had made over to her all his goods and chattels, after which the sooner he went to his long home the better for her, and perhaps for him.[1]

However, the exploits of these English and perhaps imaginary widows were far outdone by the achievements of a real Dutch widow mentioned by Evelyn, who had married five-and-twenty husbands, and was

[1] *Spectator*, No. 561.

only prevented by a cruel and oppressive law from marrying a twenty-sixth; for it appears that the illiberal Dutch legislation limits the number of a woman's husbands to a paltry quarter of a hundred. I feel bound to mention that the lady of whom I have just made honourable mention lay under some suspicion of having charitably hastened the departure of her husbands from this vale of tears to a better world; but probably the rumour was no more than the ungenerous whisper of malignant and envious tongues.[1]

The principal theatres of London in Addison's time were the Haymarket and Drury Lane.[2] Of the two, Drury Lane was the older. A theatre stood in Drury Lane in Shakespeare's time; it went by the name of the Phoenix or the Cockpit. After being destroyed by a Puritan mob in 1617, it was rebuilt and existed to 1663, when it was replaced by the first Drury Lane theatre. The new theatre was itself burned down in 1671 or 1672, but was rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren and opened in 1674 with a prologue by Dryden. This was the Drury Lane theatre frequented by Addison and his contemporaries.[3]

The Haymarket theatre was designed and opened by Vanbrugh in 1706; but at first it was almost a complete failure, partly, it would seem, because it was too distant from the city for the ordinary playgoers, but still more because the convenience of the building for the representation of plays was sacrificed to the magnificence of the architecture. The huge columns, gilded cornices, and immoderately high roof struck the spectators with surprise and wonder, but the voices of the actors were so lost in the void overhead that

[1] John Evelyn, *Diary*, under August 1641 (vol. i. p. 32).

[2] *Tatler*, No. 265; *Spectator*, Nos. 1, 13, 31, 42, 81, 361, 367.

[3] H. Morley, on *Spectator*, No. 1.

scarcely one word in ten could be distinctly heard, while the rest was drowned in a sort of confused murmur, like the hum of voices rolling and reverberating among the vaults and along the aisles of a cathedral. But if the stately building was ill-fitted for speech, it was much better adapted for music: the swelling blast of a trumpet and the high notes of a singer lingered lovingly in the hollows of that lofty roof and struck home to the hearts of the rapt listeners with a power and a sweetness they could hardly have attained in a less ample structure. Hence when the Italian opera was introduced into England in the reign of Queen Anne it found its natural home in the Haymarket; and the foreign songs and foreign music saved the theatre from the utter ruin with which it had been threatened by the continuous failure of the English pieces.[1]

It was at the Haymarket that Handel, then a stranger lately arrived in England, produced his opera of *Rinaldo* in February 1711. Though he is said to have devoted only a fortnight to its composition, the opera was highly successful.[2] Addison bore unwilling witness to its popularity. He himself apparently could see nothing in it to admire but much to ridicule. The only design of an opera, he tells us, "is to gratify the senses, and keep up an indolent attention in the audience".[3] To do the critic justice, he seems to have conformed his own behaviour very closely to the design of the performance, as he conceived it. For any reference he makes to the music, he might have been deaf; while the rest of the audience sat entranced

[1] Charles Knight, *London*, v. 284 *sq*. Compare H. Morley, on *Spectator*, No. 1.

[2] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 9th Edition, vol. xi. p. 434, *s.v.* "Handel"; H. Morley, on *Spectator*, No. 5.

[3] *Spectator*, No. 5.

by the melting airs of *Cara sposa* and *Lascia ch' io pianga*, Addison was calmly sneering at the costumes and the scenery, and was thinking, as he says, how the wits of King Charles's time, those exquisite judges of scenic propriety, would have laughed to see Nicolini exposed to a tempest in robes of ermine and sailing in an open boat upon a sea of pasteboard! what a field for raillery they would have found in painted dragons spitting wildfire, enchanted chariots drawn by Flanders mares, and real cascades in artificial landscapes! In one of the scenes the singer Nicolini engaged in a single combat with a lion on the stage, and this encounter furnished Addison with the material for a whole paper of banter in the *Spectator*, where he gave his readers in an amusing form the pretended result of his inquiries into the private history of the lions, or rather of the men in the lion's skin, who fought with Signor Nicolini on the stage to the huge delight of the audience. The first lion, he says, was a candle-snuffer, who, being of a testy choleric temper, outdid his part and would not suffer himself to be killed so easily as the exigencies of the opera required: hé was even heard to observe in private life that he had not fought his best, and that he would wrestle Mr. Nicolini for what he pleased, out of the lion's skin. As it was feared that, if he appeared again in the lion's skin, he might carry out his threat by laying the operatic singer on his back on the stage, he was dismissed and the part given to a tailor, a man of a mild and peaceable temper, who conducted himself more like a lamb than a lion on the stage, and only put out his claws to rip up the flesh-coloured doublet of his adversary for the purpose, as was generally supposed, of making work for himself in his private capacity as a

tailor. The next lion was a country gentleman, who played the part for his own diversion, but kept his name secret lest his friends should speak of him as "the ass in the lion's skin". His temper was so happily conformed to the character he had to sustain that he surpassed both his predecessors and drew together greater audiences than had been known in the memory of man. As for the report that the lion and Signor Nicolini had been seen smoking a pipe together behind the scenes, it was altogether groundless; for if there was any element of truth in it, this friendly intercourse had not taken place till after the combat was over, when the lion was to be looked upon as dead, according to the received rules of the drama.[1]

From all this agreeable raillery we may infer that the melodies of the great musician spoke to Addison with the accents of a language which he did not understand: he heard with his ears the sounds of the violins and the voices, but the soul of the music escaped him.

In his references to the dramatic as well as the operatic performances of his day Addison paid much attention to the mere outward show and trappings of the pageant. He was particularly sarcastic on stage thunder. He says in one place that last winter he had been at the first rehearsal of the new thunder, which was much more deep and sonorous than any that had been heard before. The lightning flashed more briskly than heretofore, and the clouds were better furbelowed and more voluminous. He was told that the theatre was provided with above a dozen showers of snow consisting of the plays of many unsuccessful poets cut and shredded for the purpose. These were

[1] *Spectator*, No. 13.

to fall on the head of King Lear at his next appearance on the stage.[1] As for the noise of drums, trumpets, and huzzas, he says it was so loud that when a battle was raging in the Haymarket theatre the sound of it might be heard as far as Charing Cross.[2]

But while he ridiculed the ordinary devices for lending dignity to tragedy, such as the sweeping trains of stage queens and the towering plumes of stage heroes, he was not insensible to the effect of some artifices in moving the awe or pity of the spectators. He tells us that in the parting scene between Jaffeir and Belvidera in Otway's tragedy of *Venice Preserved* the sound of the passing bell, tolling for the execution of Jaffeir's friend Pierre, then about to be broken on the wheel, caused the hearts of the whole audience to quake and made a stronger impression on the mind than mere words could convey. He also speaks with true appreciation and insight of the appearance of the ghost in *Hamlet*, which he calls a masterpiece in its kind, wrought up with every circumstance that could excite the attention of the spectator and chill his blood with horror. He explains, therefore, that he does not find fault with stage artifices when they are skilfully introduced; he would not even banish the handkerchief, which, applied to the eyes of heroines on the stage, drew sympathetic tears from tender-hearted spectators in the audience. He knew that tragedy could not subsist without handkerchiefs; he would only confine the use of that instrument of sorrow within reasonable limits. Similarly he admitted that a disconsolate mother with a child in her hand was a legitimate object of compassion, but he protested that a widow in her

[1] *Spectator*, No. 592. [2] *Spectator*, No. 42.

weeds, with half-a-dozen fatherless children clinging to her skirts, was more than the most compassionate audience could put up with.[1]

Among the actors of his day Addison mentions Betterton, Bullock, Norris, and Dogget.[2] Of these Betterton played Macbeth, while Norris, Bullock, and another actor named Bowen took the part of the witches in the tragedy. At one performance of the play Addison noted with disgust the impertinence of a lady in the audience who, a little before the rising of the curtain, broke out into a loud soliloquy, "When will the dear witches appear?" and immediately after their first appearance asked a lady, who sat three boxes from her, if those witches were not charming creatures. A little afterwards, when Betterton as Macbeth was in one of the finest speeches of the play, she shook her fan at a lady some way off and told her in a whisper that might be heard all over the pit, "We must not expect to see Balloon to-night."[3] However, Bullock and Norris often played lighter parts than the witches in *Macbeth*. Bullock in a short coat and Norris in a long one sufficed to raise a laugh in the audience.[4] But Bullock had a rival in a comic actor named Penkethman. The comparative merits of the two were appraised by Steele in the *Tatler*. Mr. Bullock, he says, had the more agreeable squall, and Mr. Penkethman the more graceful shrug. Penkethman devoured a cold chick with great applause; Bullock's talent lay chiefly in asparagus. Penkethman was very dexterous at conveying himself under a table; Bullock was no less active at jumping over a stick. Mr. Penkethman

[1] *Spectator*, No. 44.

[2] *Spectator*, Nos. 44, 45, 235, 529.

[3] *Spectator*, No. 45, with G. Gregory Smith's note.

[4] *Spectator*, No. 44.

had a great deal of money; but Mr. Bullock was the taller man.[1]

But the same graceful and tender wit falls into a graver strain when he speaks of the death of his friend Betterton, the tragedian. Having received notice that the famous actor was to be interred that evening in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, he resolved to walk thither and see the last offices paid to a man whom he had always very much admired, and from whose acting he had received stronger impressions of what is great and noble than from the arguments of the profoundest philosophers or the descriptions of the most charming poets. He could hardly conceive that Roscius himself or any actor of antiquity could ever have surpassed the acting of Betterton in any of the parts which he had played on the English stage. The wonderful agony which he appeared in, when he examined the circumstance of the handkerchief in *Othello*; the mixture of love and tenderness that intruded on his mind as he listened to the innocent answers of Desdemona, betrayed in his gestures such a variety and vicissitude of passions as would warn any man to keep watch over his own heart, lest he should stab it with that worst of daggers, jealousy. The charming passage in the same tragedy, where Othello tells how he won the love of Desdemona, was delivered by Betterton with so moving and graceful an energy, that, walking there in the cloisters of the Abbey, Steele thought of the dead player with the same concern as if he waited for the funeral of one who had done in real life all that he had seen Betterton do in the shadowy representation of the stage. The gloom of the place, and the faint lights glimmering

[1] *Tatler*, No. 188.

through the falling shades of evening, added to the feeling of sadness which oppressed him, and he began to sorrow that Brutus and Cassius had ever quarrelled; that Hotspur's gallantry was so hapless; and that all the mirth and good humour of Falstaff could not exempt him from the grave. Nay, habituated as he was to look upon the distinctions between men as merely scenical, he reflected on the emptiness of all human greatness, and could not but regret that the sacred heads which mouldered in that little parcel of earth, to which the mortal remains of his old friend were so soon to be consigned, were returned to dust as well as he, and that there is no difference in the grave between the real and the imaginary monarch. Plunged in this train of sombre reverie, he said of human life itself, with Macbeth,

> "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
> To the last syllable of recorded time,
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more."[1]

In the pages of Addison we get many glimpses of the audience as well as of the actors in the London theatres of his time. Thus he mentions that of late years there had been a certain person in the upper gallery of the play-house who, when he was pleased with anything that was acted on the stage, expressed his approbation by a loud knock on the benches or wainscot, which might be heard over the whole theatre. Hence this unknown critic in the upper

[1] *Tatler*, No. 167. I have corrected the passage from *Macbeth*, which Steele seems to have quoted from memory.

gallery came to be commonly known as the "Trunk-maker in the upper gallery", whether it was that the thwacks which he gave to the boards sounded like the knocking of a carpenter, or whether he was a real trunk-maker who unbent his mind after the labours of the day by laying about him with his hammer. All that was known for certain about him was that he was a large black man who generally leaned forward on a huge oaken plank, paying close attention to everything that passed on the stage. He was never seen to smile, but on hearing anything that pleased him he would take up his staff and apply it to the next piece of timber; after which he composed himself in his former posture till such time as something new set him again at work. It was observed that his blow was so well timed, that the most judicious critic could never except against it. No sooner was a shining thought expressed by the poet or an uncommon grace exhibited by an actor than down came the oaken staff with a resounding thwack on the bench or wainscot. If the audience did not agree with him, he smote a second time; and if they still remained dumb, he looked round him with great wrath and repeated the blow a third time, which never failed to produce a clap. He did not confine his criticisms to a single play-house. Sometimes he plied at the opera, where on Nicolini's first appearance he was said to have demolished three benches in the fury of his applause. He might break as many as half-a-dozen oaken planks in expressing his approval of a popular actor; and he seldom went away from a tragedy of Shakespeare without leaving the wainscot extremely shattered. So useful was he to the theatre by stimulating and directing the applause, that the players cheerfully repaired at their

own cost all the damage he made. And once, when he was kept away from the theatre by sickness, the manager paid a man to officiate for him in his absence ; but though the substitute laid about him with incredible violence, he did it in such wrong places that the audience soon found out it was not their old friend the trunk-maker.[1]

If the trunk-maker expressed only approval by the well-timed blows of his staff, the audience possessed another implement which they used to show their disapprobation of bad plays and bad players. This was the cat-call. It was a simple musical instrument designed to imitate those melodious sounds with which, in neighbourhoods frequented by cats, the silence of night is often so agreeably broken, and which are commonly known as caterwauling. Played in concert by a number of performers dispersed throughout the theatre, the instrument exerted a powerful effect upon the actors : it struck a damp into generals, and frighted heroes off the stage : at the first sound of it a crowned head has been seen to tremble, and a princess to fall into fits. The notes of it very much improved the sound of nonsense and went along with the voice of the actor who pronounced it as the violin or harpsichord accompanies the Italian recitativo. When the *Humourous Lieutenant* of Beaumont and Fletcher was revived on the stage in Addison's time, it was received with such a chorus of caterwauls as effectually stopped the mirthful sallies of the lieutenant.[2]

At the opera a cluster of ladies in gay hoods sometimes presented as pleasing a spectacle as any on the stage, and diverted the eyes of the audience from

[1] *Spectator*, No. 235. [2] *Spectator*, No. 361.

the performers. One evening Addison, seated in the back of a box, noticed such a bevy, and compared it to a bed of tulips, the hoods varying in colour from blue to yellow and philomot and pink and pale green. By the unspeakable satisfaction which appeared on the faces of the wearers it was easy to see that their thoughts were more taken up with their pretty hoods than with the singers on the stage.[1] Another time, sitting at an opera in the Haymarket theatre, he observed two parties of very fine women, who had placed themselves in opposite boxes and seemed drawn up in a kind of battle-array one against another. Those on the right were Whigs and those on the left were Tories, and as the badges of their respective parties they had disposed the fashionable black patches of the day on different parts of their faces. The intermediate boxes were occupied by ladies whose principles and patches were midway between these extremes, and who seemed to sit there, singularly enough, for no other purpose but to see the opera. In order to ascertain the state of political opinion among the ladies, Addison had the curiosity to count the patches on both sides, and he found that the Tories had it by about twenty ; but the balance of opinion was turned next morning at the puppet-show, where all the ladies were spotted in the Whig manner. Some cynical observers maintained that the ladies spotted their faces black, not so much to display their principles, as to catch husbands, the patches being arranged in the Whig or Tory style according to the political party of the man at whom they had set their cap. But Addison assures us, and we may readily believe him, that whatever might be the motives of a few fantastical coquettes, who patched

[1] *Spectator*, No. 265.

for their private advantage rather than the public good, there were several women of honour who patched out of principle and with a single eye to the interest of their country.[1]

For women seem to have taken as deep and intelligent an interest in politics in the days of Queen Anne as in our own. Addison describes an encounter between two female politicians across a tea-table, in which the hand of one of the disputants shook so with the earnestness of her feelings, that in the very height of the debate she spilt a dish of tea on her petticoat and scalded her fingers, which naturally broke off the argument, otherwise no one knows how it would have ended. Against such excesses of political zeal Addison earnestly warned his female readers, pointing out to them with great truth that nothing is so bad for the complexion as party spirit, since it flushes the face worse than brandy, besides giving an ill-natured cast to the eye and a disagreeable sourness to the look. On these grounds he advised all young and pretty ladies to abstain from meddling in politics; but as for the old and ugly, if indeed there be any such, he would freely let them be as violent partisans as they pleased, since there was not the least danger of their spoiling their faces or of their convincing anybody.[2]

And as in our own days so in the age of Queen Anne, the passion for learning sometimes burned as warmly in female bosoms as the passion for politics. Addison has described a visit which he paid to a learned lady and has given a catalogue of the books which he found in her library. Some of the volumes, indeed, when he attempted to peruse them, he discovered to

[1] *Spectator*, No. 81. [2] *Spectator*, No. 57.

be made of wood with no lettering at all except on the back; but others were real books, with paper pages and real printing on them. Among them he lighted upon Ogleby's *Virgil* and Dryden's *Juvenal*; Sir Isaac Newton's *Works*; *The Grand Cyrus*, with a pin stuck in one of the middle leaves; Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, with a paper of patches in it; a spelling-book; a dictionary for the explanation of hard words; Sherlock, *Upon Death*; *The Fifteen Comforts of Matrimony*; all the Classic Authors, in wood; a set of Elzevirs, by the same hand; *Clelia*, which opened of itself in the place that describes two lovers in a bower; a *Prayer-Book*, with a bottle of Hungary water beside it; Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying*; and La Ferte's *Instructions for Country Dances*.[1]

But in Queen Anne's time the passion of women for books was equalled and perhaps surpassed by their passion for china. Addison has left on record that there were no inclinations in women which more surprised him than their passions for chalk and china. The taste for chalk wore out in time, but the taste for china lasted for life. An old lady of fourscore might be seen as busy in cleaning what he calls an Indian mandarin as her grand-daughter in dressing a doll. He remembered when there were few china vessels to be seen that held more than a dish of coffee; but in his lifetime they had grown to such a size that many of them could hold half a hogshead. The fashion of the teacup, too, within his memory had greatly altered and had run through a wonderful variety of colour, shape, and size. He was informed by his lady friends that the common way of procuring china was by

[1] *Spectator*, No. 37.

exchanging old suits of clothes for the brittle ware; he himself had known an old petticoat thus metamorphosed into a punch-bowl, and a pair of breeches into a teapot. Against the extravagance into which the taste for china sometimes hurried its votaries, Addison urged his female readers to remember the vast amount of wrath and sorrow which the breaking of china daily stirred up in the hearts of his dear countrywomen, and he implored them seriously to consider, first, that all china is of a weak and transitory nature; secondly, that the fashion of it is changeable; and thirdly, that it is of no use. He suggested that if women took delight in heaping up piles of earthen platters, brown jugs, and the like useful products of British potteries, there would be some sense in it; for these might be ranged in as fine figures and disposed of in as beautiful pieces of furniture. But on second thoughts he perceived that there was an insuperable objection to the proposal, namely, that the British ware might be of some use, since the dishes might be taken down from the shelf and even eaten and drunk out of; besides which they were intolerably cheap and most shamefully durable and lasting. Under these circumstances it was vain to think of English ware competing with china in the favour of the ladies.[1]

The taste for snuff-taking would seem to have been equally diffused among both sexes in the age of Queen Anne. Men and women alike carried snuff-boxes adorned with pictures on the lids.[2] At the time when the infamous impostor and perjured scoundrel, Titus Oates, was in all his glory, posing as an idol of fashionable ladies, a saviour of the State, and a

[1] *The Lover*, No. 10. [2] *Spectator*, Nos. 57, 323.

pillar of the Protestant faith, an acquaintance of Will Honeycomb's exhibited a portrait of the so-called doctor on the lid of her snuff-box.[1] And as a singular proof of the extent to which the habit of snuff-taking was carried in the other sex, it may be mentioned that when the head of a beau was dissected after death, the cavities of the skull, which in ordinary people are filled with brains, were discovered to be stuffed with Spanish snuff. Yet in outward shape and appearance the beau in his lifetime had not differed perceptibly from other men ; he ate and drank like other people, dressed well, talked loud, laughed frequently, and on several occasions acquitted himself tolerably at a ball ; some ladies even took him for a wit. He was cut off in the flower of his age by the blow of a paring-shovel, having been surprised by an eminent citizen as he was tendering some civilities to his wife.[2]

Besides their snuff-boxes, in these days ladies carried fans, and appear to have made great use of them as weapons of offence in their attacks on the male sex. A paper in the *Spectator* contains an account of an academy instituted for the training and discipline of young women in the exercise of the fan. The head of the academy, who contributed the paper, assured his readers that the course of training was not nearly so severe and exacting as might naturally be supposed : a woman of a tolerable genius, who applied her mind to it diligently for only six months, might be able to handle her fan as gracefully as another who had devoted years to the study. Even with regard to the masterpiece of the art, which consisted in fluttering the fan, he said that if a lady did not misspend her time she might make herself mistress of

[1] *Spectator*, No. 57. [2] *Spectator*, No. 275.

it in three months; while as to the comparatively simple accomplishment of grounding a fan, which only consisted in tossing a fan with an air on a table, he positively affirmed that it might be learned in two days' time as well as in a twelvemonth.[1]

To recur for a moment to the gentleman who perished prematurely by the blow of a paring-shovel, it seems probable that this unfortunate accident prevented him from having the pleasure, or at all events the satisfaction, of meeting the lady's husband in the fields at the back of Montague House, to which gentlemen frequently retired for the settlement of any differences which might have arisen between them, the rural seclusion of the spot being eminently favourable to the calm consideration of the points in dispute. Even on their way to the fields some of the disputants thought better of it and came to an amicable arrangement to be both of them arrested by the police, which saved a needless expenditure of gunpowder and a possible effusion of blood.[2] But it was not always so, nor did the meetings always take place in the fields behind Montague House. On the morning of November 15, 1712, while the *Spectator* was being read at many breakfast tables in London, Lord Mohun fought the Duke of Hamilton in Hyde Park. Lord Mohun was killed on the spot, and the duke mortally wounded. They tried to help him to the cake-house by the ring, in the park, but he died on the grass before he could reach the house.[3]

To abate the frequency of duelling Addison had proposed in the *Tatler* to institute a Court of Honour for the peaceable settlement of dis-

[1] *Spectator*, No. 102. [2] *Tatler*, No 265
[3] Swift, *Journal to Stella*, November 15, 1712.

putes which otherwise might have been put to the arbitrament of the sword or the pistol.[1] Indeed, if we may trust the reports of its proceedings which appeared in the *Tatler*, the Court was actually established with Isaac Bickerstaff for its president; and it did adjudicate on not a few nice points of honour. One or two extracts from the journals of the Court may serve to illustrate the nature of the questions which were submitted to its jurisdiction. The jury was composed of twelve gentlemen of the Horse Guards, who unanimously chose Mr. Alexander Truncheon, their right-hand man in the troop, to be their foreman. On being impanelled, the jury drew their swords like one man and saluted the bench with great respect. The first case that came up for trial was an indictment brought by the Honourable Mr. Thomas Gules, of Gule Hall, in the county of Salop, against Peter Plumb, of London, Merchant. The indictment showed forth that, in a conversation between the two in the public street, Plumb had put on his hat two seconds before the Honourable Mr. Thomas Gules, so that for that space of time the Honourable Mr. Thomas Gules had stood bareheaded, while Plumb was covered. The evidence being very full and clear, the jury, without going out of court, declared their opinion unanimously by the voice of their foreman, that the prosecutor was bound in honour to make the sun shine through the criminal, or, as they afterwards explained themselves, to whip him through the lungs. The president, however, judged that the proposed penalty was excessive, and requested the jury to reconsider their verdict. They therefore retired and after an hour's consultation gave as their opinion that in consideration that this

[1] *Tatler*, No. 250.

was Plumb's first offence he might be allowed to escape with his life and to suffer nothing worse than the slitting of his nose and the cutting off of both his ears. Even in this mitigated form the verdict appeared to the president too severe, and he sentenced the criminal to lose his hat, the instrument of his crime, and ever thereafter to ride in a coach in the streets, leaving the footway open and undisturbed for his betters.

The next case that came up was a difference between a Welshman and a peddling Jew named Dathan. They were indicted by the keeper of an alehouse in Westminster for breaking the peace and two earthen mugs in a dispute about the antiquity of their respective families, to the great detriment of the house and the disturbance of the whole neighbourhood. Dathan said for himself that he was provoked to it by the Welshman, who pretended that the Welsh were an ancienter people than the Jews, "Whereas", said he, "I can show by this genealogy in my hand that I am the son of Mesheck, that was the son of Naboth, that was the son of Shalem, that was the son of——." But before he could climb up his genealogical tree half-way to Adam he was interrupted by the Welshman, who told him that "he could produce shennalogy as well as himself; for that he was John ap Rice, ap Shenkin, ap Shones". The jury did not waste very much of their valuable time over this petty dispute, but gave it as their verdict, that as neither of the disputants wore a sword, they had no right to quarrel on a point of honour; and that both of them should be tossed in the same blanket, and there settle the antiquity of their respective families between themselves as best they could. The president confirmed the verdict.[1]

[1] *Tatler*, No. 256.

In the reign of Queen Anne the streets of London must have presented a much more picturesque aspect than at the present day ; for they were lined on both sides by an endless succession of gay signboards, which exhibited an almost infinite variety of Blue Boars, Black Swans, and Red Lions, not to mention Flying Pigs, Hogs in Armour, and many other creatures more extraordinary than any in the deserts of Africa ; while the exuberant fancy of the sign-painter ran riot in combinations like the Cat and Fiddle, the Fox and the Goose, the Dog and Gridiron, the Lamb and the Dolphin, the Bell and the Neat's Tongue, the Three Nuns and the Hare, the Bible and Three Crowns.[1] The reason for this profusion of strange devices was that in those days the houses in the streets were not numbered ; hence it was necessary to hang out signboards for the guidance of passengers, if they were to find the places they wished to go to. Even with this clue it was often far from easy to discover the shop, house, or tavern of which you were in search ; for the signs were frequently so badly painted that it would have puzzled even a naturalist to say whether the animal at which he gazed was intended to represent a boar or a buffalo, a cat or a crocodile, a mouse or an elephant ; and to make matters worse their names were often misspelled. Many a man, we are told, lost his dinner through not being able to find his way to the tavern to which he had been directed. A cousin of Steele's, a Bachelor of Queen's College, who was to have dined at the sign of the Bear in Barbican, wandered a whole day through the mistake of one letter in the signboard, which bore inscribed on it the words, " This is the Beer " instead of " This is the

[1] *Spectator*, Nos. 28, 191 (Bible and Three Crowns in Cheapside).

Bear." He was only set right at last by inquiring of a fellow who could not read, but who was well acquainted with the tavern in question because he had often been drunk there. When Steele was a pupil at the Merchant-Taylors' School he frequently stopped on the way to read the inscriptions on the signboards, and was afterwards thrashed by his schoolmaster for his pains, because he spelled words according to the orthography, or rather the cacography, of the signboards instead of the books.[1] Some people adapted the sign of their house to the sound of their name or the nature of their occupation. Thus Mrs. Salmon, who kept a waxwork in Fleet Street, near Temple Bar, had for her sign a golden salmon; and a French tavern-keeper near Charing Cross delicately hinted at the quality of the liquor which he served to his customers by a punch-bowl with a couple of angels hovering over it and squeezing a lemon into it.[2] However, a beginning had been made of numbering the houses; for in Hatton's *New View of London*, published in 1708, it is mentioned as an exception that "in Prescott Street, Goodman's Fields, instead of signs the houses are distinguished by numbers, as the staircases in the Inns of Court and Chancery".[3] But the fashion did not set in until Parliament, in 1762, condemned the dangling signboards as a public nuisance.[4]

Not only the sights but the sounds of the London streets were very different in Addison's time from what they are now. At night the sleepers were roused from their slumbers by the thump of the

[1] *Tatler*, No. 18.

[2] *Spectator*, No. 28. As to Mrs. Salmon's waxworks, compare *Spectator*, Nos. 31, 609.

[3] H. Morley, on *Spectator*, No. 28.

[4] G. Gregory Smith, on *Spectator*, No. 28.

watchman on the door, and listened drowsily to the drone of his voice proclaiming the hour, and to the tinkle of his bell, as they receded together down the street.[1] And by day there was nothing, we are told, which more astonished a foreigner and frighted a country squire than the cries of London. When Sir Roger de Coverley quitted the silence of his park and the stillness of the green lanes and meadows of Worcestershire for the busy thoroughfares of London, he used to declare that he could not get the street cries out of his head, or go to sleep for them, the first week that he was in town. On the contrary, Will Honeycomb preferred them to the song of the lark and the warbling of the nightingale, and listened to them with more pleasure than to all the music of the hedges and groves.[2]

The cries of London in those days fell into two classes, the vocal and the instrumental. The instrumental included the twanking of a brass kettle or a frying-pan, with which any man was free to disturb a whole street and to drive the inhabitants to the verge of distraction for a whole hour together. The sow-gelder's horn had something musical in it, but it was seldom heard within the liberties, the animals on which the musician operated not being common objects of the streets. But the vocal cries were far more numerous and varied. The sale of milk was announced in sounds so shrill that they set the teeth of sensitive people on edge. The chimney-sweeper commanded a diapason of much richer compass, his notes sometimes rising into the sharpest treble and sometimes sinking into the deepest

[1] *Tatler*, No. 111. As to the bellman and the verses which he chanted, compare Milton, *Il Penseroso*, 83 *sq.*; R. Herrick, *The Bell-man*; R. Chambers, *The Book of Days*, i. 496.

[2] *Spectator*, No. 251.

bass. The same observation applied to the retailers of small coal, not to mention broken glass or brick-dust. The cooper swelled his last note in a hollow voice that was not without its harmony; and it was impossible not to be affected with a most agreeable melancholy on listening to the sad and solemn air with which the public were very often asked if they had any chairs to mend. The time of the year which is proper for the pickling of dill and cucumber was celebrated by strains which ravished the soul with an uncommon sweetness; but alas! like the song of the nightingale they were only heard for two months out of twelve. It is true that the words of the cries were often pronounced so indistinctly that it was not possible to distinguish them, nor could a stranger guess the nature of the wares which the singers vended; insomuch that a country boy has been seen to run out to buy apples from a bellows-mender, and gingerbread from a grinder of knives and scissors. And even when the words could be clearly heard, they sometimes furnished no clue to the profession of the crier. Who could know, for example, that "Work if I had it" was the signification of a corn-cutter? Nevertheless in the reign of Queen Anne, as in our own time, there were many people who had no soul for the melody of street cries; who refused to listen to the plaintive strains of the sow-gelder's horn; who turned a deaf ear to the voice of the corn-cutter; and in whose savage breast the musical request for chairs to mend awakened no response. We hear of such an one who paid a card-match-maker never to come into his street again. But what was the consequence? Why, the whole tribe of card-match-makers passed by his door the very

next morning, in hopes of being bought off after the same manner.[1]

More pleasing to many ears than the street cries was the chime of the church bells, which might be heard ringing to prayers from morning to night in some part of the city or another. When Addison's friend, the Tory fox-hunter, came to town, obsessed with a dread of lighting on meeting-houses and dissenters at every street-corner, he was much reassured in his mind by listening to the music of the church bells, and his satisfaction was increased when he looked in at St. Paul's in the middle of sermon-time and perceived the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and City Sword all sitting in the congregation, and not more than two of the venerable body fast asleep.[2]

As to the learned professions in the days of Queen Anne, time fails me to do justice to them, and I must despatch them in a few words. The profession of medicine, Addison tells us, was then represented by a most formidable body of men, whom he compared to the British army in the time of Caesar; some of them slew in chariots and some on foot, and if the infantry did less execution than the charioteers, it was only because they could not carry their ravages so quickly into all parts of the town. Addison was disposed to attribute the sparseness of the population of England in his time largely to the indefatigable exertions of the physicians. The innumerable hangers-on and bottle-washers of the profession, for want of other victims, slaked their thirst for blood by stifling cats in an air-pump, cutting up dogs alive, and impaling insects on

[1] *Spectator*, No. 251. Compare Swift, *Journal to Stella*, December 13, 1712: "Here is a restless dog, crying cabbages and savoys, plagues me every morning about this time; he is now at it. I wish his largest cabbage were sticking in his throat."

[2] *Freeholder*, No. 47.

the points of needles. As for the lawyers, if we may trust Addison, they were only a shade better than the doctors in so far as their operations were not so immediately fatal to the persons of their clients. He divided them into two classes, the litigious and the peaceable. Of the two, the litigious were much the more noxious. They were conveyed in coach-loads every morning in term-time to Westminster Hall, where they exerted themselves for a client with a degree of mercenary wrath, indignation, and eloquence proportionable to the amount of the fee which they had extorted from him. The peaceable lawyers were less iniquitous, indeed almost innocuous, like vipers whose sting has been drawn. They included many benchers of the Inns of Court, who, having retired from criminal practice, led a life of great tranquillity and comparative innocence in their chambers, eating once a day in hall and dancing once a year in honour of their respective societies. The ranks of these peaceable lawyers were recruited by many young men, who, having been sent by their confiding parents to study the laws of their country, devoted what time they could spare from the neglect of their business to attending the performances in the theatres.[1]

But it is not for me, an unworthy member of one of these professions, to speak seriously in disparagement either of the noble profession of the law or of the noble profession of medicine. No, I have seen and heard too much for that. I have seen the joy on the face of a great surgeon when he found that there was nothing for him to do, though the patient, on whom he might have had to perform a very dangerous and no doubt very lucrative operation, was a stranger

[1] *Spectator*, No. 21.

whom he had seen for the first time only the day before. No, the skill of the medical profession is great, but their humanity is greater still.

As for the law, one of my earliest impressions of the late war was the sight of members of the bar in civilian coats and hats drilling in the quiet court of the Temple under my study windows. I seem still to hear the ringing word of command and the measured tramp of marching feet, feet that were setting out on the long, long march from which so many were not to return. All honour to gentlemen of the bar! They are made of the best English stuff, and that is hard to beat.

More than once Addison refers to the smoke of London, but not in such a way as to indicate that he suffered any inconvenience from it. He says that for forty years Will Honeycomb had not passed a month out of the smoke of London;[1] and he refers sarcastically to ladies who affected foreign fopperies without having ever lived outside the smoke of London or even the parish of St. James's.[2] A very different attitude towards the nuisance was taken by Addison's older, but less robust, contemporary, the illustrious philosopher John Locke. Soon after his return from exile in Holland, where he seems to have found the air not unsuitable to his delicate frame, he complained to his Dutch friend Limborch of the injury inflicted on his health by "the pestilent smoke" of London.[3] A few years later, driven from London by the fogs and smoke of the great city, he took up his abode at the manor-house of Oates, situated in a pleasant

[1] *Spectator*, No. 131.

[2] *Spectator*, No. 45.

[3] Thomas Fowler, *Locke* (London, 1909), p. 56, "*malignus hujus urbis fumus*". Locke returned to England in February 1689 (*ib.* p. 53). As to the benefit which he derived from the air of Holland, see *ib.* p. 45.

pastoral district of Essex about twenty miles from the capital, where he spent the evening of his life in happy seclusion with his fast friends the Mashams.[1] What a London fog could be in those days, we learn from Evelyn's description of one which descended like a pall on the city in November 1699. People lost their way in it; torches or candles afforded little or no illumination. Lights were fixed on both sides of the road from London to Kensington, but robberies were committed between the very lights, while coaches and travellers were passing. On the banks of the Thames they beat drums to guide the watermen to the shore.[2] William the Third suffered from asthma, and in the air of Whitehall his constitutional malady made rapid progress. To save his life, which would almost certainly have been shortened by a prolonged residence in the smoke and fogs of Westminster, he was forced to quit London. At first he took up his abode at Hampton Court, but he finally settled at Kensington House, then a rural mansion, which he purchased and enlarged.[3] Similarly the great glory of English science, Isaac Newton, after living for many years in Jermyn Street, was constrained for the sake of his health to move out to the purer air of Kensington, where he died some years after Addison.[4]

From the pages of Addison and Steele we may glean some hints as to the extent of London in their time. Squares were springing up in the west of the town, and it was becoming the fashion to migrate to them from the city. When Sir John Anvil, merchant, married the high-bred Lady Mary Oddly, she not

[1] Thomas Fowler, *Locke*, pp. 62 *sqq.*

[2] John Evelyn, *Diary*, vol. iii. pp. 374 *sq.*, under November 15, 1699.

[3] Macaulay, *History of England*, chap. xi. vol. iii. (London, 1855), pp. 54-58.

[4] Sir David Brewster, *Life of Sir Isaac Newton* (London, 1831), pp. 320-322.

only changed his name from Anvil to the more genteel Enville, but teased him to remove from the city to one of the west-end squares, promising as an inducement that in the new house he should have as good a cock-loft as any gentleman in the square.[1] Bloomsbury Square was already built, but it was situated on the outskirts of the town ; for in a fictitious advertisement, which appeared in the *Spectator* of April 11, 1711, a gentlewoman gives notice that she had lately taken a house near Bloomsbury Square, commodiously placed next the fields in good air, where she proposed to train birds to speak the English language with great purity and volubility, copying all the polite phrases and compliments then in vogue at tea-tables and on visiting days.[2] A little to the west of Bloomsbury Square stood the magnificent mansion of Montague House, the site of which is now occupied by the British Museum. The original house had been partially destroyed by fire in 1686, but was soon restored in a style of enhanced splendour.[3] At the back of the house stretched the fields, which, as we have seen,[4] were a favourite resort of duellists.

Soho Square was eminently fashionable in Addison's time: the imaginary Lady Dainty lived there;[5] and Sir Roger de Coverley had a house in it whenever he was in town.[6] It had been built in the reign of Charles the Second a good many years before the days of the *Spectator*; John Evelyn spent the winter of 1689–1690 in it with his family.[7] The square was

[1] *Spectator*, No. 299.
[2] *Spectator*, No. 36.
[3] Charles Knight, *London*, vi. 163. The original house, which had been built some years previously by Mr. Montague, is repeatedly mentioned by John Evelyn. See his *Diary*, November 5, 1679; October 10, 1683.
[4] Above, p. 182.
[5] *Tatler*, No. 37.
[6] *Spectator*, No. 2.
[7] John Evelyn, *Diary*, vol. iii. p. 287, under November 27, 1689.

once named Monmouth Square after the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth, who had a house in it on the site afterwards occupied by Bateman's Buildings. Fashion lingered long in the neighbourhood ; at the accession of George the Third in 1760, Soho Square is said to have been still the gayest square in London.[1]

In Addison's time there were houses in Piccadilly ; for an imaginary correspondent of the *Spectator*, who describes himself as a plain handicraft man, wrote from Piccadilly to complain of the vanity and extravagance of his wife, who passed her life at the glass and was ruining him in ribbons.[2] Again, we hear of an unfortunate gentleman who was shot dead by the soft glance of a lady's eye from a casement in Piccadilly ; and we read of another poor wretch who was similarly transfixed through the sticks of a lady's fan in St. James's Church.[3] Dover Street, off Piccadilly, was already built ; for John Evelyn's son had a house in it as early as 1691 ;[4] and Evelyn himself, finding that business called him often to London, took a lease of his son's house and removed thither in June 1699, though he kept his goods at Wotton in Surrey.[5]

The gay world drove in Hyde Park, sometimes with six horses to a carriage.[6] Military reviews were also held in it ; we hear of a lady who fell in love with the Duke of Monmouth, when she saw him, in all the splendour of scarlet and gold, at the head of his troop of Guards in the park.[7] Kensington Palace had been

[1] H. Morley and G. Gregory Smith, on *Spectator*, No. 2 ; Charles Knight, *London*, vi. 197.

[2] *Spectator*, No. 211.

[3] *Spectator*, No. 377.

[4] John Evelyn, *Diary*, vol. iii. p. 290, under February 25, 1690.

[5] John Evelyn, *Diary*, June 28, 1699.

[6] *Spectator*, No. 66.

[7] *Spectator*, No. 2. Evelyn mentions a review of six thousand troops, which was witnessed by an "infinity of people" in Hyde Park. See his *Diary*, March 16, 1686. Another day (October 11, 1686) he speaks of four companies of Guards drawn up in the park.

built and Kensington gardens laid out by King William the Third.[1] Addison speaks with admiration of the upper gardens at Kensington, which, from being merely a gravel pit, had been wrought by the gardener's art into a beautiful hollow, planted with shrubs and trees that rose on one side into the semblance of a circular mount.[2]

Beyond Kensington Palace it would seem that in Addison's time there stretched on the west only fields or meadows, which divided London from the village or little town of Knightsbridge. Similarly we may conclude from a reference in the same number of the *Spectator* that London did not then reach northwards as far as St. Pancras, which is spoken of as if it were a separate town or village, though like Knightsbridge it was included within the area of the penny post.[3]

Among Addison's favourite haunts we may perhaps reckon Gray's Inn walks and the garden of Lincoln's Inn. For he lays the scene of one of the Spectator's talks with Sir Roger de Coverley in the verdure and seclusion of Gray's Inn walks, which to this day remain a sort of green oasis in the bricky wilderness of London. There on the terrace, waiting for the Spectator, the old knight hemmed with great vigour to clear his pipes, as he said, in the good air of the place, and there he discoursed with his friend on country matters, on the last sermon of his domestic chaplain, on the tobacco-stoppers which Will Wimble had been busy turning all the winter, on the death of the witch Moll White, on the open house he had kept for his tenants at the hall last Christmas, and other

[1] Compare John Evelyn, *Diary*, vol. iii. p. 290, under February 25, 1690.

[2] *Spectator*, No. 477.

[3] *Spectator*, No. 452. See above, p. 155.

topics of equal interest and importance.[1] And in another paper Addison tells us that by the favour of the benchers he was allowed to walk by himself in the garden of Lincoln's Inn; and he describes how, pacing there alone on a winter evening, he was overtaken by the dusk and drawn into an agreeable contemplation by the sight of the starry heaven, where in the clear air of a freezing night every constellation shone with a brilliancy such as he had hardly ever witnessed before.[2]

But there was no place in the town which Addison so much loved to frequent as the Royal Exchange. It gave him a secret satisfaction and in some measure gratified his vanity, as he was an Englishman, to see so rich an assembly of fellow-countrymen and foreigners consulting together upon the private business of mankind and making London a kind of emporium for the whole earth. Here he was pleased to hear disputes adjusted between an alderman and a native of Japan, or to see a subject of the Great Mogul bargaining with a subject of the Czar of Muscovy. He was infinitely delighted to mix among these motley groups, to observe their different costumes, and to listen to their different tongues. Sometimes he made one of a group of Dutchmen; sometimes he was lost in a crowd of Jews; and sometimes he was jostled by a body of Armenians. Now he fancied himself a Dane, now a Swede, and now a Frenchman; or rather, like the old philosopher, he felt himself to be a citizen of the world. Moving there a silent spectator in the busy throng, he often imagined one of the old kings, whose effigies adorned the edifice, standing in person and looking down on the wealthy concourse of

[1] *Spectator*, No. 269.

[2] *Tatler*, No. 97.

people with which the place was every day filled; and he said to himself how the monarch, come to life again, would wonder to hear all the languages of Europe spoken in this little spot of his former dominions, and to see so many private men negotiating like princes for greater sums than were formerly to be met with in the royal treasury![1]

The Royal Exchange had been burnt down in the Great Fire, but was soon afterwards rebuilt in a style of greater magnificence. It included hundreds of shops, a colonnade on the ground floor, ranges of statues painted and gilded, and an upper floor approached by spacious staircases of black marble. Steele has described a visit which he paid to the place in the hours of business. He ascended one of the stately staircases, and passed the shops where pretty young women were selling ribbons and other female wares across the counters. Resisting their attempts to attract his custom, he stepped up to a window, looked out on the throng of merchants in the quadrangle below, and listened to the confused hum of their voices.[2]

When the weather hindered him from taking his diversion without doors, Addison frequently made a party of two or three select friends to visit anything curious that might be seen under cover. His principal entertainments of this sort were pictures, insomuch that when he found the weather set in to be very bad, he had taken a whole day's journey to see a gallery that was furnished by the hands of great masters. By this means, when the sky was overcast with clouds, when the earth swam with rain, and all nature wore a

[1] *Spectator*, No. 69.
[2] *Spectator*, No. 454; Charles Knight, *London*, ii. 297 *sqq*.

lowering aspect, he withdrew himself from these uncomfortable scenes into the visionary world of art; where he met with shining landscapes, gilded triumphs, beautiful faces, and all those other objects that fill the mind with gay ideas and disperse the gloom that is apt to brood over it in those dark disconsolate seasons.[1] He does not name the gallery which cost him a whole day's journey to visit it; but we may easily guess that it was Hampton Court, and that the paintings of the great masters which diverted his thoughts from the darkened heaven and the dripping rain were above all the triumphs of Mantegna and the cartoons of Raphael. Swift in his *Journal to Stella* describes how on an October day he walked in the gardens of Hampton Court, saw the cartoons of Raphael, and, starting in a coach and pair at sunset, reached London by starlight.[2]

The last place in London to which I will ask the reader to accompany me with Addison is one which has changed but little since his time, and with which the glories of England are inseparably bound up: I mean Westminster Abbey. He tells us that in his serious and pensive moods he very often walked there by himself, and that the gloominess of the place, and the use to which it is applied, with the solemnity of the building, and the condition of the people who lie in it, filled his mind with a melancholy, or rather a thoughtfulness, that was not unpleasing. Pacing these hallowed precincts, he observed that the great war, then still raging

[1] *Spectator*, No. 83.

[2] Swift, *Journal to Stella*, October 2, 1710. On July 16, 1689, John Evelyn went to Hampton Court and noted in his diary that "a great apartment and spacious garden with fountains was beginning at the head of the canal". This "great apartment" was no doubt the stately new court built by Sir Christopher Wren for William the Third. As to the triumphs of Mantegna and other treasures of art at Hampton Court, see John Evelyn, *Diary*, June 9, 1662.

with France, had filled the church with many empty tombs and uninhabited monuments erected to the memory of men whose bones were perhaps mouldering in the plains of Blenheim or weltering in the depths of the ocean.[1] Since he wrote thus, more than two hundred years have passed away, years not the least memorable nor the least glorious in the long roll of English history. In these centuries how many sons of England, illustrious in arts, in letters, in eloquence, in arms, their race of glory run, have been borne amid a nation's mourning to their last resting-place in these solemn aisles. Addison himself sleeps there, not far from the dust of Elizabeth. There we will leave him, lying with his peers. They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

[1] *Spectator*, No. 26.

IV

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

I

WILLIAM COWPER

William Cowper, one of the best of men and one of the most charming of English poets and letter-writers, was born on the fifteenth of November (old style) 1731, in the rectory of Great Berkhampstead in Hertfordshire. He came of a good stock on both sides. His father, the Rev. John Cowper, D.D., rector of the parish, was a son of Spencer Cowper, one of the judges of the Common Pleas, and brother of the first Earl Cowper, an eminent lawyer and statesman, who was twice Lord Chancellor in the reigns of Anne and George the First. The poet's mother was Anne Donne, daughter of Roger Donne, of Ludham Hall in Norfolk; through her the poet numbered among his ancestors John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's, whose memory, even if the frigid conceits and harsh numbers of his verses were forgotten, would live in the limpid prose of Izaak Walton, the sweetest of English biographers. Through his mother, too, Cowper traced his lineage by four different lines from Henry the Third, King of England. In one of his letters he tells us that at the desire of his kinsman, the Rev. John Johnson (a Donne on the mother's side), he had sent up the long muster-roll of his ancestors, signed and dated, to Mr. Blue-mantle, adding, "Rest undisturbed, say I, their lordly, ducal, and royal dust!

Had they left me something handsome, I should have respected them more." And again in the lines on the receipt of his mother's picture he touches lightly on the same string :

> " My boast is not, that I declare my birth
> From loins enthroned and rulers of the earth :
> But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
> The son of parents passed into the skies ! "

He lost his mother when he was six years old. She died in 1737, at the age of thirty-four, in giving birth to his brother John ; but she made so deep an impression on Cowper's affectionate heart that it never wore out, and when fifty-two years afterwards he received her portrait " with a trepidation of nerves and spirits ", he could answer for the fidelity of the likeness. He kissed it and hung it by his bed where he could see it the last thing at night and the first thing at wakening in the morning. The sight of it revived his memories of her and of his childhood, and he composed, " not without tears ", the verses which enshrine her memory and his own in a casket more precious and more lasting than any of gold and jewels. It recalled the sad day when from his nursery window he watched the hearse bearing her slowly away, and heard the bell tolling to her funeral ; while the maids, in pity for his passionate grief, soothed him with promises, which he long cherished, that she would return. The picture, too, brought back happier recollections of his mother's love and care, her nightly visits to his chamber to see that he was safe and warm, the scarlet mantle in which he was wrapped, and the velvet cap he wore, when the gardener Robin drew him, day by day, in his " bauble coach " along the public way to school, and the hours he passed seated at

his mother's side playing with the flowers of her dress, the violet, the pink, and the jessamine, while she stroked his head, spoke softly to him, and smiled. Cowper's father survived the death of his wife for nearly twenty years; he died in 1756. His son, then resident in London, was sent for to attend him in his last illness, but arrived too late to see him in life. Then for the first time it struck Cowper, whose constant and affectionate nature formed strong local attachments, that the tie with the place of his birth must be broken for ever. There was not a tree, nor a gate, nor a stile in all that country, he tells us, to which he did not feel a relation, and the house itself he preferred to a palace. He sighed a long adieu to fields and woods, from which he once thought that he should never be parted, and was never so sensible of their beauties as at the moment when he left them to return no more.

After his mother's death Cowper was placed in a school kept by a Dr. Pitman, in Markyate Street, a dull straggling village of Hertfordshire, between St. Albans and Dunstable. There for two years he suffered much from the cruelty of a barbarous young bully, more than twice his age, who singled out the tenderly nurtured little boy to be the butt of systematic but secret persecution. Being at last detected, the ruffian was expelled the school. The treatment to which he was subjected at this school made naturally a deep and lasting impression on Cowper's mind, and no doubt helped to form and colour those strong views of the pernicious influence of English public schools, to which he gave powerful expression in his poem *Tirocinium*.

When Cowper was removed from Dr. Pitman's, he was in some danger of losing his sight, for specks

had appeared in his eyes, perhaps as a consequence of the persecution he had suffered, and it was feared that they might extend and cover the retina. He was therefore placed in the house of an oculist, where he remained two years. The trouble gradually subsided, though to the end of his life his eyes were liable to inflammation. In the last sad days, when, far from the green lanes and shady avenues of his beloved Weston, he paced the Norfolk beach, looking out on the grey North Sea, the salt spray so irritated his eyelids that, after vainly battling with it under an umbrella, he had to abandon his favourite walk by the ocean and content himself with roaming bypaths and under hedges, in duller scenes but softer air.

From the house of the oculist Cowper was removed at the age of ten to Westminster School. There he seems on the whole to have been happy, for in his correspondence he refers to his school-life not infrequently, and always apparently with pleasure. He records, for example, a happy dream he had had of being back at Westminster, in high favour with his master, and rewarded with a silver groat for a composition which was passed round from form to form for the admiration of his schoolfellows. Again, he tells us that he loved the memory of Vincent Bourne, " poor Vinny ", as he calls him, the poetical schoolmaster, the neatest of all men in his versification and the most slovenly in his person. He remembered seeing the Duke of Richmond set fire to the greasy locks of the absent-minded pedagogue, and then box his ears to put it out again. He thought Bourne a better Latin poet than Tibullus and Propertius, and amused himself by turning some of his verses into English. Of a robust constitution and a good walker

to the end of his days, Cowper as a youth excelled in cricket and football. Among his schoolfellows at Westminster were the poets Charles Churchill and Robert Lloyd, the stage-manager and author, George Colman, Warren Hastings, and his enemy Impey. For Hastings the poet had a high esteem, and the favourable opinion of so good a man and so shrewd a judge of character should plead strongly in favour of the accused statesman at the bar of history. On the great day when Westminster Hall, its grey old walls draped with scarlet, was crammed with the rank and fashion, the beauty, the eloquence, the genius and learning of England, gathered to witness the trial of one who had spread the fear of the English name and the sway of the English race among the dusky races of the East, Cowper thought of his old schoolfellow, the little pale-faced man with the pensive brow and the resolute lines about the mouth, facing that august assembly; and he urged his cousin Lady Hesketh, even at the risk of being squeezed and incommoded for some hours, not to miss the chance of witnessing so memorable and impressive a spectacle. She took his advice, and retired from the hall stunned by the thunder of Burke's invective. The long charges and Hastings's replies to them were read by Henry Cowper, Clerk of the House of Lords, and the report of the silence and attention with which his silvery voice was listened to by the audience for two whole days gave pleasure to his cousin the poet, who refers to the achievement in his correspondence and commemorated it in a sonnet.[1]

At the age of eighteen Cowper left Westminster

[1] Beginning—
"Cowper, whose silver voice, tasked sometimes hard."

School, and having fixed on the law as his profession, he was articled for three years to a solicitor, Mr. Chapman of Ely Place, Holborn, and resided with him during that time. One of his fellow-clerks in the office was Edward Thurlow, afterwards Lord Chancellor, who had been educated at Canterbury School. Much of the time which the two young men should have devoted to the study of law in Holborn was more agreeably spent by them not far off in Southampton Row, at the house of Cowper's uncle, Ashley Cowper, afterwards Clerk of the Parliaments, a dapper little man in a white hat with a yellow lining, which made him liable to be mistaken for a mushroom. But it was not for the pleasure of his society that the two clerks repaired with praiseworthy regularity to his abode from the dusty purlieus of the law. He had two charming daughters, Harriet and Theodora, with whom the future poet and future Lord Chancellor passed their days from morning to night "giggling and making giggle". The natural consequences followed. Cowper lost his heart to his cousin Theodora, who returned his love. Thurlow, having no heart to lose, was unmoved by the charms of the lively, handsome, and good-natured Harriet, who afterwards married Sir Thomas Hesketh, and remained the poet's kind, wise, and steady friend to the end of his life. One day, while the two young men were drinking tea with a lady friend and her sister in King Street, Bloomsbury, Cowper said to Thurlow, "Thurlow, I am nobody, and shall always be nobody, and you will be Lord Chancellor. You shall provide for me when you are!" Thurlow smiled and said, "I surely will!" "These ladies are witnesses," said Cowper. "Let them be," answered Thurlow, "for I certainly will."

The prophecy was fulfilled, but the promise was broken. A false lover (for in after life he became a father though never a husband) and a faithless friend, Thurlow appears to have been as unamiable in private life as he was rash, domineering, and headstrong in public affairs. The letters which after a silence of many years he condescended to write to his now famous friend, whom he had neglected and ignored in his poverty and obscurity, are far from confirming the testimony which Dr. Johnson bore to the intellectual capacity of this odious bully.

When he left the solicitor's office in 1752, Cowper, now in his twenty-first year, took chambers in the Middle Temple. It was there that the shadow of religious melancholy, which was afterwards to deepen into hopeless gloom, first fell across his life. He tried to dispel it by poring over the grave, sweet poetry of Herbert; but a more effectual, if temporary, relief was afforded by a visit which he paid to Southampton with Mr. Hesketh, the betrothed lover of his cousin Harriet. There, to please Mr. Hesketh, who loved yachting, Cowper wore trousers, gave himself nautical airs, and sailed the sea; but he found the confinement of a sailing-boat, even on a short voyage, exceedingly irksome, and seems to have heartily shared the opinion of Dr. Johnson, that being in a ship is like being in prison with the chance of being drowned. When the moralist of Bolt Court enriched the world with this profound maxim, he had never been to sea in his life; but very soon afterwards he had an opportunity of tasting the delights of "a life on the ocean wave". Crossing over from Skye to Coll in a small sailing vessel, he lay below "in a state of annihilation"; yet though the wind howled, the rain beat, the sea ran

high, the night was very dark, the sailors themselves were alarmed, and all on board were in real danger, Dr. Johnson behaved under these trying circumstances with the perfect composure and courage which he always displayed in the greater emergencies of life. Cowper could boast of no such heroic experience on Southampton Water, yet he deeply sympathized with Noah and Jonah, when they were enlarged from the confinement of the ark and the whale's belly respectively; and in stepping out of the good sloop *Harriet* he felt that he bore a considerable resemblance to these celebrated characters. But whenever he could be spared from the horrors of the great deep, he was happier walking with his cousin Harriet in the fields to Freemantle or Netley Abbey, scrambling with her over hedges, or seated on a height in clear still weather, looking across the sunlit sea to the New Forest.

From Southampton, after a stay of some months, he returned to his chambers in the Temple, and was called to the bar on the fourteenth of June 1754. But he had taken no pains to qualify himself for his profession; and it is more than doubtful whether he ever had a client. He tells us, indeed, that one day, reading by the fireside in his chambers, he was startled by a prodigious lumbering at the door, and on opening it beheld a most rural figure in muddy boots and great-coat, whom for a few delirious moments he took for a client drawn from afar by the renown of his legal acumen and learning to sit at the feet of the new Gamaliel. Visions of silk, if not of the woolsack, perhaps floated before the mind of the briefless barrister, but they were rudely dispelled when the stranger drew from his bulging pockets a pair of fat capons and presented them to him, explaining that he

was the farmer with whom the poet's brother lodged at Orpington in Kent. The crestfallen barrister, assisted by a few choice spirits, disposed of the capons at supper, but all prospects of legal advancement had vanished for ever.

A deeper disappointment befel him when his uncle, Ashley Cowper, refused his consent to the poet's engagement with his cousin Theodora. The reason which the father alleged for his refusal was that the tie of blood between cousins is too close to admit of marriage; but perhaps he saw the young man's incapacity for business, or discerned ominous symptoms of the mental derangement which was to follow. Be that as it may, the cousins parted and never met again. That Cowper felt the separation deeply at the time seems certain; yet in later life he appears to have forgotten his early love entirely, even while he kept up a close friendship and correspondence with her sister Harriet, Lady Hesketh. Theodora was more constant; she loved him to the end of her life, treasured the poems he had written for her, helped him without his knowledge or suspicion in his poverty, and died long after him unmarried.

During his life in the Temple, Cowper belonged to the Nonsense Club, a society of seven Westminster men who dined together every Thursday, and amused themselves by composing ludicrous verses. Among the members of the club were Bonnell Thornton, George Colman, Robert Lloyd, and Joseph Hill. The last of these was a true friend to Cowper through good and ill; the poet afterwards corresponded with him and bore honourable testimony to his sterling worth in the rhyming *Epistle to Joseph Hill, Esq.* A man of simple tastes and regular habits, Hill drudged

successfully at the law, but could relax himself from his professional cares in the country, reading on sunshiny banks, or lying on his back and watching the clouds go by. Cowper has painted another picture of Hill sitting in his box at the coffee-house on a winter evening, while the waiter with high-raised hand poured from the teapot a long and limpid cascade into the foaming, frothing cup below.

Three years after his father's death, which occurred in 1756, Cowper removed from the Middle to the Inner Temple, where he purchased chambers for two hundred and fifty pounds in an airy situation. About the same time he was made a Commissioner of Bankrupts, but he seems to have cultivated the Muses much more diligently than the law. He produced several halfpenny ballads, two or three of which had the honour to become popular ; and with his brother John, then studying for the Church at Cambridge, he kept up a rhyming correspondence : the whole of it he preserved for a time, but it perished in the wreck of a thousand other things when he left the Temple. He also helped his brother with a translation of Voltaire's *Henriade*, contributing a version of four books. With a friend named Alston he about this time read Homer through, comparing Pope's translation with the original all the way, and coming to the conclusion that there was hardly anything in the world of which Pope was so destitute as a taste for Homer. Cowper also contributed a few papers to the *Connoisseur*, a magazine of essays in the style of the *Spectator* and the *Rambler*, which was started by his two school-friends, Bonnell Thornton and George Colman, in January 1754 and ran till September 1756. The same friends were two of the original proprietors

of the *St. James's Chronicle*, a newspaper characterized by a vein of playful satire, to which Cowper also made a few contributions.

When he had reached his thirty-second year, his little patrimony was well-nigh spent, and there was no appearance that he would ever be able to repair the loss by the practice of his profession. About this time the Clerkship of the Journals of the House of Lords fell vacant and was offered to Cowper by his kinsman, Major Cowper, who had it in his gift. As the business of the office was transacted in private, the poet thought that the post would exactly suit his shy and retiring temperament. But hardly had he acquiesced in the prospect when he began to be assailed by serious doubts and misgivings ; and his uneasiness was greatly increased by some opposition that was made to his proposed appointment, as well as by the intelligence that he would have to be publicly examined at the bar of the House of Lords in order to give proof of his qualification for the office. This last news fell on him like a thunderbolt. Peace forsook him by day and by night: a nervous fever attacked him; and though he endeavoured to qualify himself for his duties by reading the Journals of the House of Lords daily for about six months, his distress continued, and every time he set foot in the office he felt like a condemned criminal arriving at the place of execution. This could not last, and when the vacation was pretty far advanced, he went in the month of August 1763 to Margate to rest his aching brain and restore his shattered nerves by fresh air and sea breezes.[1] The

[1] In the previous year (September 1762) Cowper had paid a visit to Brighton and found it "a scene of idleness and luxury, music, dancing, cards, walking, riding, bathing, eating, drinking, coffee, tea, scandal, dressing, yawning, sleeping".

visit, like the one on a similar occasion to Southampton, had a beneficial effect. Little as he enjoyed sailing on the sea, he loved the prospect of the ocean, and the solemn monotonous roar of the waves, he tells us, affected him as sweet music affects others, composing his thoughts into a melancholy not unpleasing. But the lullaby of the billows has its dangers. One day walking on the strand, where the cliff is high and perpendicular, Cowper failed for a time to notice that the tide was rising, and when he did observe it, it was almost too late. By running at full speed he was just able to reach one of the cartways cut through the rock, which led him to the top of the cliff and to safety. While the sea pleased him at Margate, the society did not. Every week the sailing hoy (for it was long before the days of steamers) went to London loaded with mackerel and herrings, and returned loaded with company which was more lively than select. By the same hoy Charles Lamb afterwards made the same voyage in the company of the gentleman who professed to have sailed under the legs of the Colossus of Rhodes ; and for all its delays and discomforts the essayist preferred the old sailing vessel, with its weather-beaten, sunburnt captain, to the trimness and foppery of the modern steam-packet which he lived to see.

From Margate the poet returned to London refreshed, but only to plunge into deeper shades of misery. The terror of the dreaded ordeal increased : he grew sullen and reserved : he fled from society and shut himself up in his chambers : when his cousin, Lady Hesketh, came to see him, he would not speak to her or look at her. To such a pitch did his insane fears carry him that, on the morning of the day when he was to appear at the bar of the House of Lords, he

made a determined and nearly successful attempt on his life. When Major Cowper called at his rooms to conduct him to the House, he found his unhappy relative in a condition which once for all put an end to the prospect of his holding the parliamentary office. But the removal of this anxiety did not bring peace to his troubled mind : the disease was too deep-seated, and soon developed into a black religious melancholy, or rather mania, which obliged his family to put him under restraint. In December 1763 he was removed to a private asylum kept by Dr. Nathaniel Cotton, a skilful doctor and a good man, at St. Albans. Under the care of this kind and judicious physician Cowper recovered his senses in a few months, but it was a year and a half before he ventured to leave the asylum and face the outer world once more. In the interval his religious despair had been changed by a strong revulsion of feeling into religious rapture : from believing himself eternally damned he now came to believe himself eternally saved, and was transported with joy and gratitude : he grudged even the hours of slumber because they interrupted the flow of his happy meditation on the blissful work of the Redeemer. At first the sudden transition excited the fears of Dr. Cotton ; but, himself a devout Christian, he was led by the assurances of his patient to acquiesce in the soundness of his cure, and henceforth, so long as Cowper remained in his house, the two had much happy discourse together on the subjects of their common faith.

When he was sufficiently recovered to leave the asylum, Cowper resolved to avoid London and seek a quiet home for himself elsewhere. He was very poor ; for his patrimony was spent, or nearly so, and he now

resigned his Commissionership of Bankrupts which had brought him in £60 a year. But his family subscribed to make him an annual allowance ; among those who contributed was his kind and generous kinsman, Major Cowper. The poet's wish was to settle near his brother John, who, after holding a curacy at Orpington in Kent, was now a Fellow of St. Benet's (Corpus Christi) College, Cambridge ; but somewhat strangely his brother could find no suitable lodgings for him nearer than Huntingdon. Cowper left St. Albans on the seventeenth of June 1765, very early in the morning, and reached Cambridge the same day. After a stay of four days there he removed to Huntingdon, where his brother saw him installed in his lodgings and left him.

His mind had now recovered its natural tone of cheerful serenity, and the letters which he wrote from Huntingdon to his friends breathe a spirit of tranquil happiness and contentedness with his surroundings. It was then the height of summer, and he enjoyed bathing in the Ouse, whose broad stream and flowery banks he praises in a letter written on Midsummer Day shortly after his arrival. He thought the town one of the neatest in England and the country round it fine. "I am persuaded in short", he writes to Lady Hesketh, "that if I had the choice of all England, where to fix my abode, I could not have chosen better for myself, and most likely I should not have chosen so well." To a passing traveller, it must be acknowledged, the attractions of the scenery about Huntingdon hardly lie on the surface. He sees in it little but flat green meadows and sluggish streams, their banks fringed by willows, with here and there a grey church-tower standing out among trees, or the sails of a wind-

mill breaking the low monotonous line of the horizon. But Cowper was happy. After the storm he had found a calm; and among these green pastures and beside these still waters he doubtless often meditated, with a full heart, on the Good Shepherd, who, as he fondly believed, had led His strayed sheep into a quiet fold.

The distance from Cambridge made Cowper a horseman, for he met his brother John alternately at Cambridge and Huntingdon; and though he sometimes got a lift in a neighbour's chaise he generally rode over, a distance of some fifteen miles across a flat country, to the University town. Amongst the friends to whom he wrote from Huntingdon were the ever-faithful Joseph Hill, who had kindly taken charge of Cowper's affairs during his illness, Lady Hesketh, and Major and Mrs. Cowper. Of these Mrs. Cowper was his first cousin. Her brother was Martin Madan, at that time chaplain to the Lock Hospital, a clergyman of the Church of England whose style of preaching approached to that of the Methodists, then rising into importance. He had visited Cowper during his mental affliction in the Temple, and had attempted to soothe his cousin's distress by religious consolation. Afterwards he incurred Cowper's deep disgust by publishing a treatise called *Thelyphthora* in defence of polygamy. To that work the poet makes many references in his letters. It drew down on its author a storm of opprobrium, which drove him from his chaplaincy into retirement.

The longer Cowper stayed at Huntingdon the more he liked the place and the people. "In about two months after my arrival", he says, "I became known to all the visitable people here, and do veritably think

it the most agreeable neighbourhood I ever saw." Amongst the acquaintances whom he made at Huntingdon was the family of the Unwins, destined to influence the whole subsequent course of his life. It consisted of a father and mother, a son and a daughter. The father, the Rev. Morley Unwin, a man now advanced in years, had been master of the free school and lecturer to the two churches at Huntingdon before he obtained a college living at Grimstone in Norfolk. His wife, whose memory is imperishably linked with that of Cowper, was Mary Cawthorne, the daughter of a draper at Ely. She was much younger than her husband. Her understanding was good, her temperament calm and cheerful, her piety deep and fervent, her countenance grave, but sweet and serene. She was well read in the English poets and had excellent literary taste : she loved rural walks ; and her manners, according to Cowper, a very good judge, were more polite than those of a duchess. Not liking the society and the sequestered situation of Grimstone, she persuaded her husband to return to Huntingdon, where he was known and respected. Accordingly he took a large convenient house in the High Street of the town,[1] and received into it a few pupils, whom he prepared for the University. His only children were a son and daughter. The son, William Cawthorne Unwin, an amiable young man of about twenty-one, had lately returned home after graduating at Cambridge. The daughter, Susanna, was a girl of about eighteen, " rather handsome and genteel ", as

[1] The house, a plain edifice built of bricks, which once were red but have turned a dusky colour, has now been divided into two. The parlour, in which Cowper is believed to have sat with the family, is a handsome apartment on the ground-floor with three deep windows looking out on the street. The church of St. Mary, where he is said to have worshipped, is only a few steps off across the street.

Cowper describes her ; she appears to have resembled her mother in character as well as in piety. Altogether Cowper found the Unwins " the cheerfulest and most engaging family-piece it is possible to conceive ".

The friendship which he struck up with them, based on congenial tastes and similar dispositions, was so close that when a vacancy occurred in Mr. Unwin's house through the departure of a pupil, Cowper applied to succeed him, and on the eleventh of November 1765 he became an inmate of the house. In his letters he describes the calm, happy, regular life which he led as one of the family—the morning prayers and service in church, the early dinner, the religious talk in the garden, the walk after tea, the evening reading and conversation till supper, the hymns sung to Mrs. Unwin's accompaniment on the harpsichord, and, last of all, the evening prayers. In this peaceful round his life glided quietly away for more than eighteen months. Even wintry weather, which dispelled some of the summer charms of Huntingdon, could not spoil his domestic happiness. " I am glad ", he writes to Lady Hesketh in January 1767, " you spent your súmmer in a place so agreeable to you. As to me, my lot is cast in a country where we have neither woods nor commons, nor pleasant prospects : all flat and insipid ; in the summer adorned only with blue willows, and in the winter covered with a flood. Such it is at present : our bridges shaken almost to pieces ; our poor willows torn away by the roots, and our haycocks almost afloat. Yet even here we are happy ; at least I am so ; and if I have no groves with benches conveniently disposed, nor commons overgrown with thyme to regale me, neither do I want them. You thought to make my mouth water at the charms of Taplow, but you see you

are disappointed." In a memoir of his life and sufferings, which Cowper drew up at Huntingdon for the benefit of his new friends, and which was published after his death, he concludes his sad story by expressing his contentment with his " place of rest ", and his hope that nothing but death might interrupt the even tenor of the life he enjoyed there.

But a tragic interruption was at hand. In July 1767 Mr. Morley Unwin, riding on a Sunday morning to his church at Graveley, was thrown from his horse and died, after lingering in pain for several days in the cottage to which he had been carried. This broke the tie which bound Mrs. Unwin to Huntingdon; she decided to leave the place, and Cowper resolved to go with her. The son, William Cawthorne Unwin, had meantime taken orders and been ordained to a curacy. A visit which they received at Huntingdon from the Rev. John Newton a few days after Mr. Morley Unwin's death determined Mrs. Unwin and Cowper to remove to Olney, where Mr. Newton was curate. He undertook to find a house for them, and they accepted his offer. Accordingly, he engaged Orchard Side, a tall, plain, red-brick house standing in the market-place of Olney, and so near the vicarage that by opening doorways in the garden walls the occupants of the two houses could communicate without going into the street. Newton lived in the vicarage, for Moses Browne, the vicar, burdened with a large family, was an absentee through debt. Thither accordingly Mrs. Unwin and Cowper removed, and were settled in their new home before the end of the year.

The town of Olney is the most northerly in Buckinghamshire. It stands on the northern side of the

Ouse, and consisted in Cowper's time of little more than a single long street, broadening about the middle into a triangular market-place adorned with three fine elms. Most of the houses were built of yellow stone with thatched roofs. The outstanding features of the place were the handsome old church with its tall spire rising on the outskirts of the town, and the long bridge with arches of various shapes and sizes bestriding the river in front.[1] At Olney the Ouse is a sluggish stream winding in serpentine curves between banks fringed by bulrushes. On either side the meadows are flat and green, and beyond them the ground rises into heights which here advance towards the river in flat promontories, and there recede from it in shallow bays. Standing on the bridge and looking westward up the stream, you see on higher ground, at a distance of less than two miles, tall forest trees rising up against the sky-line, and seeming to overhang a square church-tower. They mark the site of Weston Underwood. The road to it, so often trodden by the feet of William Cowper and Mary Unwin, runs parallel to the river, hardly more than half a field's breadth up the slope; from the point where the road rises with the swell of the ground, there is a pleasant prospect over the broad green valley of the Ouse, a prospect loved by the poet and celebrated by him in the first book of *The Task*.[2]

In itself the town of Olney was mean, if not squalid, and a great proportion of the inhabitants miserably poor. Lace-making, an unwholesome sedentary occu-

[1] The old bridge, having fallen into disrepair, was pulled down in 1832 and replaced by a much shorter one.

[2] Olney and its neighbourhood are described with loving fidelity by Hugh Miller, in his *First Impressions of England and its People*, chap. xv. He made a pilgrimage to Olney and Weston in the autumn of 1845, and was so fortunate as to be guided over the poet's haunts by a hale old woman who well remembered Cowper and Mrs. Unwin.

pation, was the principal industry, and with straw-plaiting it employed so many women and children that the farmers of the neighbourhood found it difficult to obtain hands for their work. In his house on the market-place, adjoining the lane called Silver End, the least reputable quarter of the town, the poet had to put up with the incessant screaming of children and barking of dogs; and on the fifth of November, when the urchins were particularly obstreperous, and engaged in a sport which they called hockey, but which consisted essentially in bespattering each other and the windows of the houses with mud, the poet was forced from time to time to arise in his wrath and threaten them with a horse-whip. Putrid exhalations, fishy fumes of marsh miasma, and miry roads in winter are among the unattractive features of Olney which Cowper has left on record. When William Unwin first visited his mother at Olney and contemplated the front of the house, he was shocked; in his eyes it had the appearance of a prison.

Mrs. Unwin and Cowper had been drawn from Huntingdon to Olney by the attractions of the Rev. John Newton, whose clerical ministrations they expected to enjoy. They certainly received them in full measure, but whether they enjoyed them or benefited by them is at least open to question. Newton, a man of robust constitution and iron nerve, had begun life as a captain of a Liverpool slaver, a profession which he afterwards exchanged for that of a clergyman of the Church of England. That his piety was deep and sincere, and that he had a disinterested affection for Cowper, cannot be doubted; but it seems equally certain that he was very indiscreet, and that the religious stimulants with which he plied Cowper's

sensitive and highly strung nature had a most pernicious influence, and were indeed a main cause of the terrible relapse into insanity which the poet suffered a few years after settling at Olney. Nor was Cowper the only victim of the Rev. John Newton's injudicious zeal. The reverend gentleman has left it on record that his name was "up about the country for preaching people mad"; he knew near a dozen of his flock, most of them pious or, as he phrases it, gracious people, who were disordered in their minds, and he wondered whether the cause was the sedentary lives the women led over their lace-pillows, or the crowded little rooms in which they lived. The principal cause, if we may judge by Cowper's case, was Newton himself. He had engaged an uninhabited house called "the Great House" in Olney, and here he held prayer-meetings characterized by religious heat and excitement. At these the shy poet, who had already sacrificed his career in life and been driven into an asylum at the mere prospect of speaking in public, had often to lead the devotions of the godly, engaging aloud in extemporary prayer, the cynosure of all eyes and ears in the assembly. That he did so with impressive effect we are told and can well believe; but we know from his own testimony that such public exhibitions cost him hours of great agitation before he took part in them, and we can easily imagine the rapid pulse, the flushed cheek, and the throbbing head with which he issued from the meetings, after exposing his heart's deepest emotions to the scrutiny of the censorious, too often, it may be feared, to the mere idle curiosity of the vulgar. Even his walks on summer evenings were sacrificed to these religious exercises; and instead of enjoying the fresh air and sunshine in

the open fields he was shut up in the house listening to long-winded prayers and sermons till supper-time.

The baneful effect of all this on Cowper soon manifested itself. After the settlement at Olney his letters to his friends first became rare and then ceased altogether. The correspondence with Lady Hesketh came to an end, and was not resumed for many years; that with Joseph Hill grew perfunctory and was chiefly confined to matters of business, which that unwearied friend continued to transact for the recluse. The distance from Cambridge also cut him off from easy intercourse with his brother; instead of meeting once a week they met now only once a year. In July 1769 he lost the companionship of his friend William Unwin, who left Olney to reside at Stock, near Ramsden, in Essex, of which he had been appointed rector. Another blow fell on the poet in March 1770 when his brother died of asthma at Cambridge. Cowper was with him in his last days, and wrote an account of his illness and death, which is included in his works. Thus more and more isolated and left to the tender mercies of the Rev. John Newton, Cowper gradually sank into a profound melancholy, which the composition of the *Olney Hymns*, undertaken at Newton's suggestion by the two friends jointly in 1771, was hardly of a sufficiently recreative and exhilarating character to dispel.

By January 1773 the melancholy had deepened into madness. One night towards the end of the month the symptoms were so alarming that Mr. and Mrs. Newton were roused from bed at four o'clock in the morning to attend him, which they did promptly. The most threatening appearance soon wore off, but the malady continued for months. On the approach

of the annual fair at Olney, which was held in April, Cowper entreated to be allowed to pass the night at the vicarage in order to be out of hearing of the noise. The request was granted ; he went for a night and stayed for more than a year, his terrors making it impossible to remove him except by force, which Newton was too affectionate a friend to employ. We should have had more sympathy with Newton in this embarrassing situation, if he had not drawn the trouble on himself by his injudicious conduct. However, in the trying circumstances, he seems to have behaved well, submitting with patience to the humours and fancies of the poor sufferer, and refusing to accept any pecuniary remuneration for the extraordinary expenses to which he was put by the presence of two uninvited guests. For Mrs. Unwin accompanied Cowper to the vicarage, and was unwearied in her attendance on him by day and night, " equally regardless of her own health and of the uncharitable construction of censorious and malignant tongues ". For the state of mind of the invalid required a constant watch to be kept on him : it grew rather worse than better, and in October he attempted his life under the insane idea that God required him to offer himself up as a sacrifice after the approved style of Abraham and Isaac, with the important difference that the sacrificer was to operate on himself instead of merely on a beloved son. The murderous attempt, like its prototype, fortunately miscarried. Gradually the cloud began to lift : though he spoke little, and never except when spoken to, he pruned the trees in the garden : at last he began to make remarks on them, and one happy day, in feeding the chickens, he was seen to smile. Soon after he was persuaded to return

home, and from that time the amendment seems to have proceeded steadily.

Shortly before his return, in May 1774, Mrs. Unwin's daughter Susanna was married to the Rev. Matthew Powley, vicar of Dewsbury, and removed with her husband to Yorkshire, so that Cowper and Mrs. Unwin were now left alone at Orchard Side. The poet took to gardening and carpentering; and a friend presented him with three hares, which afforded him a fund of innocent amusement. Their memory, even their individual characters, he has immortalized in Latin and English, in verse and prose. In 1776, after a silence of about four years, he resumed his correspondence with his friends. But the stream of his letters did not flow freely till after Newton's departure from Olney, which happily for the poet took place in September 1779. The good shepherd was very far from being satisfied with his flock; indeed their prospects for eternity, if we may take his word for it, were exceedingly gloomy. He spoke of them privately in most uncomplimentary language. He called them sons of Belial, lions and firebrands, men whose teeth were spears and arrows, and their tongues a sharp sword, bad enough when they were sober, but very terrible when they were drunk. He compared himself and the few righteous in Olney to pious Lot residing in the midst of Sodom, and the comparison, though unquestionably graceful and possibly just, was not of a sort, if it got wind, to ingratiate him with his parishioners. Indeed the relations between him and them seem to have been severely strained, and they came to a breaking point when he ventured to denounce from the pulpit the popular celebrations of Guy Fawkes's Day, and in particular

to discourage the lighting of bonfires and the illumination of houses with candles on that festive evening. This was too much. So long as he confined himself strictly to hellfire and brimstone, he might be tolerated, but when he touched the sacred ark of bonfires and tallow candles on the Fifth of November, the populace rose like one man. There was a general explosion. On Guy Fawkes's night people put candles in their windows who had never done so before; and those who had done so before, now put twice as many. Night was turned into day by the blaze of the illumination. A mob paraded the street, smashing windows and extorting money from one end of the town to the other. The vicarage was threatened. The curate committed the case to the Lord, but the Lord paid no attention. Providence did not interpose. The crowd drew near. Mrs. Newton was terrified. A flag of truce was sent out, a parley was held. Soft words had some effect, a shilling had much more, the mob dispersed, and they slept in peace at the vicarage.

So in time Mr. Newton, in the character of righteous Lot, turned his back on Olney and retired to London, where he had been presented by his friend Mr. Thornton to the rectory of St. Mary Woolnoth. But the parallel was not completed by the destruction of the wicked town. Olney survived his departure: the effervescence stirred up by his fiery ministry subsided, and the percentage of lunacy in the parish visibly declined. Peace of mind once more reigned at Orchard Side, and Cowper entered on what was perhaps the happiest period of his life. Not that he was then or ever afterwards perfectly happy: the shadow of religious melancholy was never wholly absent from his mind: it always crossed and chequered

the natural sunshine of his disposition and the outwardly calm flow of his peaceful days; but by constant occupation of mind and body he was able to some extent to keep it under control. Of this chequered existence his letters henceforth present a full, almost a daily record, down to the time when he left his home in Weston to drag out the miserable remainder of his days in Norfolk. The principal events of these quiet years were the writing and the publication of his books, the revival of old friendships, and the acquisition of new. Of these outstanding incidents in the poet's otherwise uneventful career a brief notice may not be out of place.

In the curacy of Olney Mr. Newton was succeeded by the Rev. Thomas Scott, author of an elephantine commentary on the Bible in one hundred and seventy-four parts, which achieved the distinction of breaking the unfortunate publisher and reducing the commentator himself to indigence. However, he was amply rewarded for his labours by the honour of very nearly saving John Henry Newman's immortal soul,[1] and by the diploma of D.D. forwarded to him from the "Dickensonian College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania", by persons whose names appear not to be blazoned on the bead-roll of fame. His style of preaching was acrid: he had a low opinion of his parishioners, and was at no pains to conceal his opinion: he detected several "professors" who had more leaves than fruit; and as he preached only twice a day on Sundays, he failed to satisfy the immoderate appetite for sermons which the population of Olney had contracted under

[1] "The writer who made a deeper impression on my mind than any other, and to whom (humanly speaking) I almost owe my soul—Thomas Scott of Aston Sandford" (J. H. Newman, *Apologia pro vita sua* (London, 1888), p. 5).

his predecessor, so that there was a melancholy falling away to Dissent.

If Mr. Newton did much to unhinge his friend's mind, he at least made an attempt, after his departure from Olney, to repair the mischief. With this humane intention he invited Cowper to consider the parallel case of the Rev. Simon Browne, a respectable dissenting clergyman, who having suffered a domestic bereavement or knocked a highwayman on the head (for accounts differ as to the source of his mental affliction) sank into a deep dejection, ending in a settled persuasion that "he had fallen under the sensible displeasure of God, who had caused his rational soul gradually to perish, and left him only an animal life, in common with brutes; so that, though he retained the faculty of speaking in a manner that appeared rational to others, he had all the while no more notion of what he said than a parrot—being utterly divested of consciousness". In this melancholy situation Browne proposed to apply for the restitution of his lost soul, singularly enough, to Queen Caroline; but the application being nipped in the bud by his friends, he devoted his shattered energies to the composition of a dictionary, a work for which, as he observed with some appearance of justice, the possession of a rational soul is wholly unnecessary. Later in life, sinking still lower in the scale of being, he turned his attention to polemical divinity, a subject to which his caustic remarks on dictionaries might perhaps be applied with equal force and even greater justice. But the spectacle of a once rational mind reduced to such deplorable extremities brought no comfort to poor Cowper. He admitted, perhaps he even smiled at, the delusion of the lexicographer and

divine, but he refused to apply the lesson to his own case.

Mr. Newton rendered Cowper a much better service when, on leaving Olney, he introduced him to the Rev. William Bull, an Independent minister residing at Newport Pagnell, five miles distant from Olney. A man of sober mind yet fine imagination, amiable disposition, literary tastes, and cultivated understanding, Mr. Bull was an entertaining companion in society, though at other times his vivacity was dashed with a vein of tender and delicate melancholy. Motives of compassion at first led him to visit Cowper once a fortnight, but the two soon became good friends; the poet occasionally returned his visits, and corresponded with him. Cowper now betook himself to gardening. In the plain little garden at the back of the house he built a couple of frames for growing pines, and glazed them himself with glass procured from Bedford. He also amused himself with carpentry, manufacturing tables in profusion, and joint-stools such as never were before or since. He also made squirrel-houses, hutches for rabbits, and bird-cages, as well as any squire in the country; and in the article of cabbage-nets he had no superior. He even took to drawing, and cultivated that fine art for a whole year, producing as the fruit of much labour a series of figures which had, he assures us, the merit of being unparalleled by any productions either of art or nature. In Mrs. Unwin's eyes they were beautiful, and she had three of his landscapes framed and glazed. After recounting his artistic exploits in one of his letters, he bursts out, "O! I could spend whole days and moonlight nights in feeding upon a lovely prospect! My eyes drink the rivers as they flow."

Happily for the world he sought for recreation and found his true vocation in literature. Mrs. Unwin urged him to write a long poem, and suggested as a subject " The Progress of Error ". He assented, and engaged in the labour of poetry with such ardour that between December 1780 and March 1781 he had completed four long poems, *The Progress of Error*, *Truth*, *Table Talk*, and *Expostulation*. The task of finding a publisher was undertaken by Mr. Newton, who induced Mr. Joseph Johnson, of St. Paul's Churchyard, to accept the book. Johnson had already published several volumes for Newton, who esteemed him, though not a professing Christian, a man of honour and integrity ; indeed he admitted with regret that " professors ", by which in the cant of his sect he meant persons who make open profession of religion, " in general find they may more safely depend upon the people of the world, than upon one another ". A sad testimony for a " professor " to bear to " professors " ! Henceforth all Cowper's works were published by Johnson, and though the poet often repined at the slowness of the printing-press he seems to have had no other ground for complaint against his publisher ; indeed after many years of business relations with him the poet expressed his belief, and apparently his astonishment, that " though a bookseller, he has in him the soul of a gentleman ". To the credit of his discernment, Johnson manifested more than common interest in Cowper's poems ; he read them critically in the proof-sheets and marked several defective passages, which the candid author corrected with grateful acknowledgements to his censor and publisher. The book went slowly through the press : the printing dragged out through the whole of

the summer and autumn of 1781, and the volume was not published till March 1782. But the delay was attended by a great advantage: the author was not only able to polish the original poems in accordance with his opinion that to touch and retouch is the secret of almost all good writing; with the encouragement of his publisher he added several fresh poems, including *Conversation* and *Retirement*. At Cowper's request Newton wrote a preface for the volume, but its serious tone frightened the publisher, who thought that, while it might attract the pious, it would disgust the profane; and as he apparently rested his hopes of the sale of the work rather on the profane than on the pious part of the public, he earnestly recommended that the obnoxious preface should be withdrawn. Cowper regretfully and Newton honourably acquiesced. It was not till the volume had run through four editions and could stand on its own merits that Johnson ventured to prefix to it Newton's well-meant tribute to his friend's poetry.

The summer of 1781, when Cowper was busy with his poetical labours and the correction of the press, was very hot: the fields languished and the upland grass was burnt. In order to procure some coolness and shade in the garden, where the heat reflected from the walls and the gravel seemed like that of Africa, Cowper converted a small greenhouse into a summer parlour. The walls were hung with mats, the floor covered with a carpet, and the sun for the most part excluded by an awning; and in this pleasant nook, with myrtles looking in at the window, and a prospect of rows of pinks and beans, of carnations and roses blooming in the sunshine outside, the poet and his friends passed the heat of the day in happy converse

or contented silence, while the rustling of the wind in the trees, the singing of birds, and the hum of bees in a bed of mignonette made music in their ears.

For by this time the domestic circle at Orchard Side was enlarged by an important addition. One day, looking out of the parlour window on the market-place, Cowper saw two ladies calling at a shop opposite. One of them he knew ; she was Mrs. Jones, wife of a clergyman who resided at the village of Clifton within a mile of Olney. But who was the other ? Cowper's curiosity was aroused : he made inquiries, and it turned out that she was Lady Austen, sister of Mrs. Jones and widow of Sir Robert Austen, a baronet. Struck by her appearance, the poet persuaded Mrs. Unwin to ask the two ladies to tea, though when they came, his shyness getting the better of him, he could hardly be prevailed on to face the stranger. However, having forced himself to engage in conversation with Lady Austen, a lively agreeable woman of the world, he was so stirred and attracted by her that he escorted the two ladies back to Clifton, and cultivated his new acquaintance with such assiduity that he soon came to call her by the familiar title of " Sister Ann ". On her side, Lady Austen found the society at Orchard Side no less to her mind ; and the two families were quickly on the most intimate terms. One fine July day they picnicked together in the Spinney, a delightful bower in Weston Park. The eatables and drinkables were conveyed to the spot in a wheelbarrow : the servants boiled the kettle under a great elm : the wheelbarrow served as a tea-table ; and after a walk in the neighbouring Wilderness the friends returned home, having spent the day together from noon till

evening without one cross occurrence, or the least weariness of each other.

So pleased indeed was Lady Austen with Olney and its society, that she thought of settling in it as soon as she could dispose of her house in London. Cowper welcomed the prospect for Mrs. Unwin's sake as well as his own; for since the departure of the Newtons she had had no female friends in the place, nor even a woman with whom she could converse in any emergency. With her high spirits, lively fancy, and ready flow of conversation, Lady Austen promised to introduce a sprightliness into the calm home, which, if it was peaceful before, might be none the worse for being a little enlivened. For a time the promise was fulfilled, the fair prospect was unclouded; and when Lady Austen returned to London in October the two friends at Orchard Side missed her. Cowper and she corresponded; but when she expressed too romantic an idea of the merits of her new friends, and too high-flown expectation of happiness from her intercourse with them, Cowper was constrained to check these effusions in a letter which gave deep offence, and for a while all correspondence between them ceased.

However, in time the lady relented and sent a peace-offering of ruffles, which was accepted. The breach was healed, and in the following summer (1782) Lady Austen returned to the house of her sister, situated on the brow of a hill, the foot of which is washed by the river Ouse as it flows between Clifton and Olney. But in the absence of Mr. Jones, the house was besieged by burglars every night, and the ladies, worn out with watching and repeated alarms, were at last prevailed on to take refuge with Mrs. Unwin at Olney. When Mr. Jones returned

and men with firearms had put the ruffians to flight, Mrs. Jones went back to the house, but Lady Austen remained in Olney, and lodgings were taken for her at the vicarage. Only an orchard divided the garden of the vicarage from the garden of Cowper's house; and to facilitate communication doors were opened in the two garden walls, so that the inmates of the houses could meet when they pleased without going through the dirty streets of the town. They now saw each other daily and for many hours a day. They met every morning, dined with each other alternately except on Sundays, and did not separate till ten or eleven at night. In the morning Cowper walked with the ladies, in the afternoon he wound thread for them, in the evening he played at battledore and shuttlecock with one of them, while the other played on the harpsichord, and a little dog, lying under the performer's chair, howled an accompaniment.

On the whole, this social intercourse, while it imposed a heavy tax on Cowper's time, was highly beneficial to his health and spirits. The gay, vivacious Lady Austen dispelled for a time the clouds of melancholy which too often hung over him: she was the Muse who inspired the most sportive and some of the most serious of his poems. He composed songs for her to sing to the harpsichord; amongst others the *Dirge for the Royal George* was written to suit one of her favourite airs. Another day, seeing him sunk in dejection, she told him the story of John Gilpin. Next morning he said that he had lain awake most of the night laughing at the story, and that he had turned it into a ballad. The ballad was eagerly copied, and finding its way into the newspapers was publicly recited by the comedian Henderson with

great success. It became very popular before Cowper publicly acknowledged it by printing it along with *The Task* in the second volume of his poetry. The theme of *The Task* itself, the greatest of his poems, and one of the most delightful works in the English language, was suggested by Lady Austen. She had often urged him to try his hand at blank verse, and he promised to comply if she would find him a subject. "Oh," she answered, "you can never be in want of a subject; you can write upon any; write upon this sofa!" The poet took the hint and set to work on *The Task* early in the summer of 1783. Writing sometimes an hour a day, sometimes half an hour, and sometimes two hours, often in great depression of spirits, he completed the poem in the autumn of the following year, but it was not published till June 1785. In the interval the friendship with Lady Austen was severed for ever, and in the summer of 1784 she had left Olney not to return. The cause of the breach has not been fully ascertained, but on the whole it seems probable that she was in love with Cowper and wished to marry him; that Mrs. Unwin was jealous, and that Cowper, too deeply attached to his Mary to dream of wounding her loving and faithful heart, renounced for her sake all relations with his brilliant and fascinating friend. He bade her farewell in a letter which, in a burst of mortification and pique, she destroyed.[1]

But if Cowper lost a friend in Lady Austen, he about the same time gained new friends in the Throckmortons of the Hall at Weston Underwood. Their house, which has long since been razed to the ground,

[1] Lady Austen, who had resided much in France, afterwards married an accomplished Frenchman, M. de Tardiff, and died at Paris, in 1802, two years after Cowper.

stood in an old-fashioned park, which skirts the high road from Olney at the point where it enters the village. The head of the Throckmorton family was then Sir Robert Throckmorton, a very old gentleman, who resided at his seat of Bucklands in Berkshire. On the death of an elder brother in 1782, Mr. (afterwards Sir) John Throckmorton came into possession of Weston Park. With his predecessor at the Park Cowper had had no relations, though he had been favoured with a key to the pleasure-grounds, and thus had been able to enjoy those rural walks and scenes which he has immortalized in the first book of *The Task*,—the umbrageous avenue of chestnuts—the rustic bridge where the willows dipped their pendent boughs in the stream—the proud alcove crowning the summit, with its far prospect over the nearer woodlands to the winding Ouse—the lime-tree walk with its high verdurous arch like a cathedral aisle, and the ground dappled with dancing lights and shadows as the wind stirred the light leaves overhead—the Wilderness with its well-rolled paths of easy sweep—and last the elm-grove, from between whose stately trunks on autumn days the thresher might be discerned sweating at his task, while the chaff flew wide and the straw sent up a mist of motes that sparkled in the noonday sunshine.

When Mr. John Throckmorton came to reside in Weston, Cowper sent him a complimentary card, and requested a continuance of the privilege which he had enjoyed by the favour of Mr. Throckmorton's mother, who had gone to end her days at Bath. The request was readily granted, but for about two years there was no intercourse between the families at Olney and Weston. The Throckmortons were Catholics, and

having on that account received many gross affronts after they settled at Weston, they were naturally shy of making new acquaintances. However, in May 1784, when balloons had just come into fashion, Mr. Throckmorton determined to send up one from his park, and among the neighbours whom he invited to witness the ascent were Cowper and Mrs. Unwin. They went and were received by the Throckmortons with particular civility. A warm regard on both sides was the result of the happy meeting. Cowper found Mr. Throckmorton most agreeable and engaging, and in Mrs. Throckmorton, "young, genteel, and handsome", he saw a "consummate assemblage of all that is called good-nature, complaisance, and innocent cheerfulness". They on their side appear to have been no less pleased with their visitors. A few days later, when Cowper and Mrs. Unwin were sheltering from a shower under a large elm in a grove fronting Weston Hall, Mrs. Throckmorton ran out to them in the rain, and insisted on their coming into the house till the weather cleared. Again, a few days passed, and Cowper and Mrs. Unwin on a walk through the park had almost reached the gate, when the iron gate of the courtyard rang, and they saw Mr. Throckmorton hastily advancing to them. He came to offer them the key of the garden, the only part of his grounds where he and his wife enjoyed perfect privacy. It was not long afterwards before the friends stood on a footing of cordial intimacy. Cowper was given full access to the library, a valuable privilege to one so fond of books, and so poorly provided with them; for though he had owned a good collection of books when he resided in the Temple, he lost it on his removal to St. Albans, and his efforts afterwards to recover it were fruitless.

The publication of *The Task* and *John Gilpin* in the summer of 1785 made Cowper famous. Even his neighbours at Olney—and neighbours are generally the last to recognize that there can be anything out of the common in a man whom they see walking about every day—admitted that their fellow-townsman was a genius. The curate, Mr. Scott, expressed his admiration, and the schoolmaster, Samuel Teedon, carefully pointed out to the author all the beauties in his own poems, lest the poet himself should have overlooked them. But better than the fame, deserved as it was, and lasting as it has proved, which the volume brought him, was the renewal of his friendship with his beloved cousin, Lady Hesketh. After a mutual silence of many years she wrote to him in the autumn of 1785, and the letter came like sunshine into the quiet parlour at Orchard Side.

It would be doing great injustice to Lady Hesketh to suppose that it was the establishment of Cowper's reputation which induced her, as it seems to have induced other friends of former days, Thurlow and Colman, to renew acquaintance with him. She had ceased to correspond with him when he sank into a religious melancholy which she deplored, and which, with characteristic good sense, she attributed in large measure to its real cause, the eternal praying and preaching of Mr. Newton. She renewed the correspondence with her cousin, whom she always loved and [illegible]nded, when his published writings gave evidence that he had recovered a healthier tone of mind, and when accordingly she need not fear being drawn by him into a bootless religious controversy. She seems to have been an admirable woman, of a good understanding, a cheerful equable temper, and a warm heart.

From her portrait, painted by Cotes in 1755, we may judge that she was handsome : those who remembered her in her prime spoke of her as a brilliant beauty who drew all eyes on her at Ranelagh.

It was a happy day for Cowper when, coming down to breakfast on an October morning in 1785, he saw on the table a letter franked by his uncle, Ashley Cowper, and on opening it found a letter from Lady Hesketh. It was the beginning of a fresh correspondence in which he poured out to her all the wealth of his brotherly affection, all the playful humour and gaiety of his naturally serene and cheerful disposition. In one of his early letters to her at this period, in answer perhaps to some inquiries of hers, he describes himself as a very smart youth of his years (which were fifty-four in number), rather bald than grey, with enough hair of his own to curl at his ears, and to hang down a little below the bag-wig which he wore, with a black riband about his neck. From his account of himself in *The Task*, published that summer, we know that advancing years had not yet pilfered from him

> " The elastic spring of an unwearied foot
> That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence,
> That play of lungs inhaling and again
> Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes
> Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me."

Nor had they impaired his relish of fair prospects : the scenes that soothed and charmed him in his youth still soothed and charmed him growing old, when he gazed on them with his arm fast locked in hers, the dear companion of his walks through twenty winters.

With the renewal of her correspondence, Lady Hesketh, now a widow by the death of Sir Thomas Hesketh a few years before, opened the springs of her

bounty, and Cowper's letters to her are full of thanks for the substantial marks of her kindness and affection which frequently arrived at Orchard Side. With them, too, came from time to time presents from a nameless benefactor, whom Cowper calls Anonymous, and who appears to have been, though he never guessed the secret, his forgotten, but never forgetful love, Theodora Cowper. From writing to his cousin it was natural that Cowper should entertain the wish to see her again. The wish was mutual and was shared by Mrs. Unwin. Accordingly during the winter it was arranged between them that Lady Hesketh should come to them at Olney in the following June. As Orchard Side was not commodious enough to lodge her and her servants in comfort, apartments were engaged for her at a house opposite.

Thenceforth Cowper's letters to his cousin contain many references to the pleasure which he anticipated from her visit in the coming summer. Seated by the fireside one wintry afternoon he saw her chamber windows across the way coated with snow, and he thought how the roses would begin to blow and the heat perhaps to be troublesome before Lady Hesketh would be with them. And as the time drew nearer his impatience to see her increased. In his letters he speaks of the walks they would take together, especially to Weston, their pleasantest retreat of all, though the road thither was shadeless all the way. But he went no more, he said, to the field by the Ouse where the poplars used to make a cool colonnade, their tops rustling in the breeze and their images reflected in the placid stream; for the trees were felled, and though the prospect from the field was still beautiful, it had ceased to attract him. And writing one May morning,

while the grass under the windows was bespangled with dewdrops and the birds were singing among the blossoms of the apple-trees, he tells how the day before they had taken their customary walk in the Wilderness at Weston, had seen with regret the laburnums, syringas, and guelder-roses, some in bloom, some about to blow, and had remembered that all these would be gone by the time Lady Hesketh was come. And though he consoled himself with the thought that there would be roses, and jasmine, and honeysuckle, and shady walks, and cool alcoves, yet he grudged that the advance of the season should steal away a single pleasure before she could come to enjoy it.

Lodgings were finally engaged for her, not at the house opposite Orchard Side, but at the vicarage, the same lodgings which Lady Austen had occupied before. The vicarage was then in a dreary comfortless condition, almost bare of furniture, for the vicar, Moses Browne, an old man of eighty-six, lived in it alone, without even a servant, and waited on only by a woman who made his bed, dressed his dinner, and left him to his lucubrations. Furniture had to be put in and other preparations made for the comfort of Lady Hesketh and the three servants she was to bring with her. These arrangements were actively carried out by Mrs. Unwin, and Cowper in his letters to his cousin describes the house, and the smart furniture with which, under Mrs. Unwin's superintendence, it was being garnished. The vicarage was a new house, neatly built of stone with sash windows: the square garden was enclosed with walls, but was shadeless except for the shadow of the house: the windows of Lady Hesketh's chamber commanded a view over the

meadows and the river, with the long bridge occupying a conspicuous place in the foreground, and the road winding away in the distance. Her bed was draped with a superb coverlet of printed cotton adorned with classical subjects : every morning she would open her eyes on Phaethon kneeling to Apollo, and imploring him to grant him the conduct of the chariot of the sun for a day.

So at last, after some delays and disappointments, Lady Hesketh arrived, and in her cheerful company Cowper and Mrs. Unwin were happier than they had ever been before at Olney. Nor were they the only people in the town to whom the presence of the kind-hearted lady brought smiles and sunshine. Every time she went out she took with her coppers in a velvet bag with which she made the children happy. Many years afterwards, when Cowper and his friends had long been dead and gone, an old woman of Olney remembered this Lady Bountiful and the poet himself in his white cap and suit of green turned up with buff,[1] and the little dog Beau trotting beside them—a smart petted creature with silken ears, who one summer day made himself famous for ever by plunging into the Ouse and bringing back in his mouth a water-lily which his master had vainly tried to reach with his stick.

The arrival of Lady Hesketh at Olney soon led to an important change in the life of her two friends. She was dissatisfied, not without cause, both with Olney and with their house. Cowper and Mrs. Unwin

[1] Hugh Miller, *First Impressions of England and its People* (Edinburgh, 1889), chap. xv. pp. 253 *sq.* The old woman said "green turned up with black", but I have ventured to correct her memory by Cowper's own statement : "Green and buff are colours in which I am oftener seen than in any others, and are become almost as natural to me as to a parrot."

were fond of rural walks, and largely depended on them for the maintenance of their health and spirits; but at Olney they had suffered much in health from confinement, for in winter the roads in the neighbourhood were muddy and in summer they were hot and shadeless, so that by the time the two friends reached their favourite haunt, the woods of Weston, they were tired, and it was time to return. A gravel walk in their garden, about thirty yards long, was the only promenade on which they could count in all weathers, and, as Cowper observed, it afforded but indifferent scope to the locomotive faculty; the battlements of the Tower, he says, had he been confined a prisoner to that fortress, would have furnished him with a larger space for exercise. Fortunately at this time a good house, belonging to Mr. Throckmorton and close to his pleasure-grounds, was vacant at Weston: within a few days of Lady Hesketh's arrival it was settled that the friends were to take it and move into it in the autumn.[1]

Cowper was delighted with the prospect. "Lady Hesketh", he writes, "is our good angel, by whose aid we are enabled to pass into a better air, and a more walkable country. The imprisonment that we have suffered here for so many winters has hurt us both. That we may suffer it no longer, she stoops to Olney, lifts us from our swamp, and sets us down on the elevated grounds of Weston Underwood." The village of Weston, he says, is one of the prettiest villages in England, terminated at one end by the church-tower seen through trees and at the other by a very handsome gateway, opening into a fine grove

[1] From Cowper's letters we see that Lady Hesketh had not arrived at Olney by June 12, 1786, and that by June 19, only a week later, the house was already taken and the removal settled.

of elms ; and the walks round about are at all seasons of the year delightful.[1] The house itself, facing the village street on one side and a garden and orchard on the other, is a pleasant commodious old dwelling ; and though in poetical language Cowper might call it a cottage or a hermitage, he reminds us that, when poets speak of such a thing, they always mean a house with six sash windows in front, two comfortable parlours, a smart staircase, and three bedrooms of convenient size ; in short, a house answering exactly to the Lodge at Weston, which was to be henceforth his home. Lady Hesketh spared no expense in fitting up the house for the comfort of the new tenants, and they moved into it on the sixteenth of November 1786. Their old house at Olney had been falling into disrepair and threatened to tumble about their ears ; and when it stood empty the candidates for the tenancy were a shoemaker and a publican, who kept the Horse and Groom at Olney. Yet the poet tells us that he could not look for the last time without a pang of regret on the ruinous abode, where he had been unhappy for so many years, and that he felt something like a heartache at bidding farewell to a scene that had nothing in itself to engage affection.

But when the domestic chaos inseparable from the removal to a new house had somewhat subsided, Cowper began thoroughly to enjoy his new surroundings. Though the weather was wintry, the house was always snug and warm, and he could ramble every day in a new direction with short grass

[1] The village and the park seem to have changed very little since Cowper's time, except that the Hall has been pulled down, and the road now runs through "the very handsome gateway" mentioned by the poet. The church is a plain grey building with a short square tower, standing on somewhat higher ground at the western end of the village.

under his feet, and come home after a walk of five miles with shoes not too dirty for a drawing-room. On these rambles he was sometimes joined by the Throckmortons, who continued to be the most obliging of neighbours. In their company he walked to the cliff, a beautiful terrace sloping gently down to the Ouse, from the brow of which the view over the valley far surpassed any that could be had from what Cowper calls the hills near Olney. But scarcely had the friends begun to enjoy the pleasantness of their new situation, and to find as much comfort as the season of the year would permit, when their happiness was marred by a heavy bereavement. William Unwin, Cowper's friend and Mrs. Unwin's son, died of a putrid fever at Winchester, on a tour which he had taken with a friend to the West of England. He is buried in the south aisle of Winchester Cathedral.

After he had finished *The Task* and sent away the last proof-sheet corrected, Cowper very soon felt the need of engaging in some other literary labour in order to divert his thoughts from the melancholy themes on which, in hours of idleness, he was apt to brood. One day, being in great distress of mind, he took up the *Iliad*, and, merely to turn his attention, translated the first twelve lines of the poem. The same necessity pressing on him, he had recourse again and again to the same expedient, till gradually he conceived the plan of making a complete new verse translation of Homer. Upon this task he soon set to work in earnest: it furnished him with unremitting occupation for about six years, proving indeed, though not the most important, by far the most laborious of his literary undertakings. The translation was begun at Olney in 1785, only a few weeks after the completion of

The Task; and the book was published by subscription in two handsome quarto volumes by Joseph Johnson at London in July 1791.

In the interval his letters contain many allusions to his strenuous labours in the Homeric field, and many valuable critical remarks on the literary art. It is impossible to read them, and similar remarks scattered through his correspondence, without recognizing the endless pains which Cowper took to give the most perfect polish he could command to every one of the many thousands of verses which flowed from his pen. Yet it may be safely affirmed that no writer has left fewer traces of the literary file than he has done in his writings. All his productions are characterized by a seemingly spontaneous and natural flow, as if they had tripped off his pen without premeditation and without effort. It is only from his own frank and repeated confessions, or rather professions, that we learn the labour that it cost him thus to give to art the appearance of nature. On the other hand, he tells us, and there is every reason to believe him, that he took no pains whatever with the composition of his letters, but reeled them off helter-skelter as fast as his pen would run. The reason for the difference was that while his poems, at least all the longer ones, were intended for the public eye, his letters were written purely for his private friends, and he never dreamed of their being published. He did not, like Pope, sit at his desk with one eye turned to his correspondent and the other, the weather eye, fixed immovably upon the public: his object was simply to chat with a friend at a distance; it was not, like that of the little man at Twickenham, to pose before the world as a paragon of virtue and genius. All such

literary artifices, indeed affectations of every sort, were abhorrent to the honest mind of Cowper. That is why the letters of Pope are so nauseous, and the letters of Cowper so delightful. The letters of the one reek of the midnight oil, the letters of the other breathe the fresh perfume of the flowers and the fields he loved. Many of Cowper's original letters are preserved, and they fully bear out all that he himself tells us as to the perfect ease and fluency with which they were written; for "they are in a clear, beautiful, running hand, and it is rarely that an erasure occurs in them, or the slightest alteration of phrase".[1]

While we may regret that Cowper devoted to a translation of Homer the time and labour which might have been better employed in the composition of original masterpieces, we must admit that in his mental state constant literary occupation was almost a necessity for him, and that so far as he found it in Homer, he benefited personally by his devotion to the task, though the world in general was the loser by it. In the execution of the laborious undertaking he received much cordial assistance of various kinds from friends. Not long after he had put himself into the Homeric harness, he received a visit from his old schoolfellow, the Rev. Walter Bagot, who, hearing of the poet's new venture, subscribed to the translation, and undertook to procure subscriptions among his friends and acquaintances, many of them people of high rank and wealth. Cowper's old and ever-faithful friend, Joseph Hill, also bestirred himself in beating up for subscribers to the Homer. A new friend, who helped him in the labour of transcribing his translation

[1] *The Life and Works of William Cowper*, by Robert Southey, vol. i. p. 314. Some of the letters are now exhibited in the poet's house at Olney, which has been turned into a museum. They confirm Southey's description.

for the press, was a young man, Samuel Rose. The son of a schoolmaster at Chiswick, he studied at the University of Glasgow, and on his way from Glasgow to London in January 1787, turned six miles out of his way to visit Cowper at Weston, drawn by his admiration of the poet's writings, and charged with compliments for him from some of the Scotch professors. Next year he paid a visit to Weston, when Lady Hesketh was also staying there, and in a letter written at the time he has given a pleasing account of the happy regular life they led in each other's company. They breakfasted about half-past nine, and spent an hour over it in lively conversation, enjoying themselves most wonderfully. Then they separated to their various tasks and occupations; Cowper to translate Homer, Rose to copy what was already translated, Lady Hesketh to work or read, "and Mrs. Unwin, who in everything but her face, is like a kind angel sent from heaven to guard the health of our poet, is busy in domestic concerns. At one, our labours finished, the poet and I walk for two hours. I then drink most plentiful draughts of instruction which flow from his lips, instruction so sweet, and goodness so exquisite, that one *loves* it for its flavour. At three we return and dress, and the succeeding hour brings dinner upon the table, and collects again the smiling countenances of the family to partake of the neat and elegant meal. Conversation continues till tea-time; when an entertaining volume engrosses our thoughts till the last meal is announced. Conversation again, and then rest before twelve, to enable us to rise again to the same round of innocent, virtuous pleasure. Can you wonder that I should feel melancholy at the thought of leaving such a family; or rather, will you

not be surprised at my resolution to depart from this quiet scene on Thursday next?" It was through Rose that Cowper became acquainted with the poetry of Burns, for whose natural genius he expresses admiration, though he wishes that the Scotch bard would divest himself of his "uncouth dialect", and "content himself with writing pure English, in which he appears perfectly qualified to excel".

Several years later, in January 1790, Cowper made the personal acquaintance of a young kinsman, who was to play a very important part in the remainder of the poet's life. This was John Johnson, "Johnny of Norfolk", as Cowper familiarly calls him. He was a grandson of Cowper's maternal uncle, Roger Donne, who had been rector of Catfield in Norfolk. At this time he was a student at Cambridge and made use of a Christmas vacation to introduce himself to his now famous relative at Weston. Cowper conceived a warm affection for the young man, who, though somewhat bashful, appears to have been very engaging, full of light-hearted gaiety and humour. When he was about to take orders not long afterwards, Cowper warned him to adopt a somewhat more sober deportment, inasmuch as the spectacle of a skipping, curveting, bounding divine might not be altogether to the taste of his parishioners. The youth returned the poet's affection, and when he left Weston, after his first visit, he carried off with him several books of Homer to write out fair from Cowper's foul copy. On the completion of the whole work in September 1790, young Johnson conveyed the precious and voluminous manuscript, the result of five years' labour, to his namesake the publisher in London. "He has gone", says Cowper, "with a box full of poetry, of which I

think nobody will plunder him. He has only to say what it is, and there is no commodity I think a freebooter would covet less."

Another indirect result of John Johnson's first visit to Weston was to give birth to one of Cowper's most justly celebrated poems. The young man had observed with what affection Cowper spoke of his mother. The only portrait of her in existence was in possession of her niece Mrs. Bodham, Johnson's aunt, whom the poet had known and loved in her childhood. She was his cousin, Anne Donne, daughter of his mother's brother. Born at Catfield in Norfolk in 1748, she married in 1781 the Rev. Thomas Bodham, of Mattishall Hall in Norfolk, whom she survived for nearly fifty years, dying at a great age in 1846. On hearing from her nephew of the tender memories which Cowper cherished of his mother, Mrs. Bodham kindly and generously made him a present of the portrait. The arrival of the picture made a deep impression on him ; he thanked Mrs. Bodham warmly for it, and celebrated the event in immortal verse.

Among those who took a warm interest in the progress of Cowper's translation of Homer were his attached friends at Weston Park, the Throckmortons. Both Mrs. Throckmorton and her husband's younger brother, Mr. George Throckmorton (afterwards Mr. Courtenay), acted as his amanuensis in making fair copies of his rough manuscript. When Lady Hesketh visited Cowper for the first time at Olney in the summer of 1786, she transcribed Homer for him, but on her departure Mrs. Throckmorton solicited the office of scribe and undertook to be the translator's " lady of the inkbottle " for the rest of the winter. At the same

time, when the move to Weston had been decided on, but not yet carried out, the reserve between the friends wearing off, Mr. Throckmorton talked to Cowper with great pleasure of the comfort he proposed to himself from their winter-evening conversations, his purpose apparently being that the two families should spend their evenings alternately with each other. These happy anticipations appear to have been perfectly fulfilled so long as the Throckmortons, or Frogs, as Cowper affectionately calls them, continued to reside at Weston. In Cowper's letters there are many pleasing glimpses of the constant and friendly intercourse between the Lodge and the Hall. One day, for example, when he was expecting Lady Hesketh's arrival and was doubtful which of two roads she should take, one being heavy and the other rough, he met the Frogs armed with bows and arrows going to practise at the target in the garden. On putting the question to them, Mrs. Frog cut a caper on the grass-plot and said she would go ride to Olney immediately on purpose to examine the road. Sometimes Mrs. Frog drove him over to pay a morning call on the Chesters at Chicheley. On one of these occasions, dressed in state for the call, and awaiting the arrival of two chaises, with a strong party of ladies, the shy poet looked with envy at a poor old woman coming up the lane, and thought how happy she was to be exempted by her situation in life from making herself fine of a morning and going in a chaise to pay visits. He was more at his ease in a quiet sociable evening at the Hall, while Mr. Throckmorton spoke to him of his Homer, "with sparkling eyes and a face expressive of the highest pleasure", or Mrs. Throckmorton played to him on the harpsichord.

These kind neighbours he lost in March 1792, when on the death of his father, Sir Robert Throckmorton, Mr. John Throckmorton succeeded to the baronetcy and removed with his wife, now Lady Throckmorton, to the family estate of Bucklands in Berkshire. He was succeeded at Weston Hall by his younger brother, George Throckmorton, who had changed his name to Courtenay. His wife, Mrs. Courtenay, was Cowper's correspondent Catharina. She had been a Miss Stapleton, and even before her marriage Cowper had known and liked her at the Hall, where she played and sang like an angel. Her union with Mr. Courtenay, which took place in the summer of 1792, made the poet happy. She and her husband proved no less kind and friendly neighbours than their predecessors. When Cowper went to the Hall to pay his first visit to them after their marriage, Mr. Courtenay flew into the court to meet him, and when he entered the parlour Catharina sprang into his arms.

But the poet went that summer day alone to the Hall. A great sorrow had befallen him. For some years Mrs. Unwin's health had been failing. In January 1789 she fell on the gravel walk, then slippery with ice, and though she neither broke nor dislocated any bones, she received an injury which for a time crippled her entirely. She recovered the power of walking and resumed her household duties, but it may be doubted whether she ever was quite strong again. In the following summer Cowper mentions that the day before he had dined alone with Mr. Throckmorton at the Hall, the ways being miry and Mrs. Unwin no longer able to walk in pattens or clogs. During the next two years she suffered almost constantly from a

pain in her side, which nearly forbade her the use of the pen, so that she could not transcribe Cowper's verses.

But much worse was to follow. One Saturday in December 1791, while Cowper was at his desk near the window and Mrs. Unwin was seated in her chair at the fireside, he suddenly heard her cry, "Oh! Mr. Cowper, don't let me fall!" He sprang to her and with difficulty caught and raised her as she was falling with her chair to the floor. She had been seized with a violent dizziness, which affected her sight and her speech, though she did not lose consciousness. It was a paralytic stroke. However, the symptoms gradually abated, and she slowly recovered. But in the following May (1792) she was struck again, this time much more severely: her speech became almost unintelligible, her features distorted, she could hardly open her eyes, and she lost entirely the use of her right hand and arm. Nevertheless she again partially recovered: electricity was applied with seemingly good results. Early in June her speech was nearly perfect, her eyes open almost all day, and her step greatly improved. By the middle of the month, though still feeble, she could walk down and up stairs, leaning with one hand on Cowper's arm and the other on the balustrade. In this sad and anxious time Cowper seems to have borne up wonderfully, exerting himself to the utmost to repay by unremitting attention to the beloved invalid all the care that for so many years she had lavished on him. Writing to his publisher in July he says: "Days, weeks, and months escape me, and nothing is done, nor is it possible for me to do anything that demands study and attention in the present state of our family. I am the electrician;

I am the escort into the garden ; I am wanted, in short, on a hundred little occasions that occur every day in Mrs. Unwin's present state of infirmity ; and I see no probability that I shall be less occupied in the same indispensable duties for a long time to come." Indeed, the two fast friends had seen their brightest hours together, and the clouded evening of their life drew on apace. Yet even now the descending sun broke through the gathering clouds to bid them a last, a sweet farewell. They had made a new friend who was to cheer and comfort them both for a while in their sad decline. The friend was William Hayley.

Immediately on the conclusion of his long Homeric labours, Cowper, to whose mental health steady occupation was essential, cast about for something else to do, and thought for a while that he had found it in editing and annotating a splendid edition of Milton's poetical works, which was to be published by Joseph Johnson, and illustrated with thirty pictures by the painter Fuseli, a man of fine literary taste, who had criticized minutely the proof-sheets of Cowper's Homer. In spite of the poet's warm admiration for Milton and his intimate acquaintance with his poetry, the office of editor and commentator imposed an irksome restraint on his original genius, curbing and bridling his Pegasus even more effectually than Homer had done ; it weighed on instead of lightening his spirits, and had to be ultimately renounced. But it brought incidentally the advantage of making him acquainted with Hayley, who, happening to be then engaged on a *Life of Milton*, and reading in the newspapers a paragraph which described himself and Cowper as rivals in the Miltonic field, wrote to the poet a generous letter full of admiration for his genius,

and disclaiming all intentions of doing anything that would clash with the projected edition of Milton's works. Cowper answered in the same spirit, and the two poets became warm friends.

For a poet Hayley was in his time, though his poetry has long passed into oblivion. Indeed, the literary critics of the day, some of whom had poured contempt on Cowper's first volume, hailed the first public appearance of Hayley as that of a new and bright star on the poetical horizon. They perceived in him an almost unrivalled excellence, an imagination truly creative, and a judgement critically exact. The inimitable pen of this masterly writer, we are informed, drew animated portraits with admirable truth and precision. He combined the fire and invention of Dryden with the wit and ease of Prior, and if his versification was a shade less polished than that of Pope, it was very much more various. Meretricious ornaments he studiously eschewed, and though his ideas were conceived in the finest vein of poetical frenzy, they were expressed with the most elegant perspicuity and the chastest simplicity. To crown all, he believed in revealed religion. This was enough. The bard was swept up to the seventh poetical heaven in a halo of glory and a whirlwind of praise. The public, stimulated by the blast of the critical trumpet, purchased his works with a perseverance worthy of a better cause. They were distributed as prizes, they were bestowed as presents: the perusal of them reformed the character of intractable young ladies, and kindled a flame in the bosom of nursery-gardeners, who refused to accept payment for their wares from the great man when they discovered his identity. The surly Thurlow complimented him. Pitt offered

him the laureateship. In short, he stood for a time on the lofty pedestal which had been lately vacated by the imperishable Pye, and was afterwards adorned by the immortal Tupper. But it could not last. The time came to knock him down and put up another in his place. The thing was soon done. The brazen trumpet again rang out: the public gaped at the last new idol; and poor Hayley was forgotten.

But if he was an indifferent poet, Hayley was an affectionate friend, as free as Cowper himself from those mean passions of envy and jealousy which, in the opinion of a censorious world, are peculiarly apt to wring the breasts of authors. He used all his influence with Thurlow to extract from him a pension for Cowper. He artfully presented the chancellor's bastard daughter with a copy of Cowper's poems: he breakfasted with the great man himself, and exerted his utmost powers of personal fascination, which were considerable, but it was all to no purpose; for though, being a man of sanguine temperament, he left the breakfast table in high feather under the impression that he had softened the nether millstone of Thurlow's heart, nothing but disappointment came of the interview.

However, Hayley did much better for Cowper than get him a pension. He visited him at Weston in May 1792, and by his amiable manners, his buoyant, lively disposition, and agreeable conversation he won the hearts and cheered the lives of the two recluses. On his side Hayley was no less charmed with them. Writing from Weston to his friend the painter Romney, he says: "Often have I wished to convey you by magic to my side, when you were not near me; but I believe I never wished it more ardently than I have

done under this very kind poetical roof. You would be pleased here, as I am, and think with me, that my brother bard is one of the most interesting creatures in the world, from the powerful united influence of rare genius and singular misfortunes, with the additional charm of mild and engaging manners. Then as to the grand article of females (for what is a scene without a woman in it?), here is a muse of seventy, that I perfectly idolize. Here is a wonderful scene; it would affect you, I know, as it does me. Few things in life have given me such heartfelt satisfaction as my visit to this house; and the more so as my kind hosts seem to regard me as sent to them by Providence, for our general delight and advantage."[1] And in the biographical notices which he interspersed in his posthumous edition of Cowper's letters he thus writes of his first visit to Weston: "My host, though now in his sixty-first year, appeared as happily exempt from all the infirmities of advanced life, as friendship could wish him to be; and his more elderly companion, not materially oppressed by age, discovered a benevolent alertness of character that seemed to promise a continuance of their domestic comfort. Their reception of me was kindness itself: I was enchanted to find that the manners and conversation of Cowper resembled his poetry, charming by unaffected elegance, and the graces of a benevolent spirit. I looked with affectionate veneration and pleasure on the lady, who having devoted her life and fortune to the service of this tender and sublime genius, in watching over him with maternal vigilance through many years of the darkest calamity, appeared to be now enjoying a

[1] Hayley somewhat exaggerates Mrs. Unwin's age. Having been born in 1724 she was then (1792) about sixty-eight. Cowper, born in 1731, was about seven years younger.

reward justly due to the noblest exertions of friendship, in contemplating the health and the renown of the poet whom she had the happiness to preserve. It seemed hardly possible to survey human nature in a more touching and a more satisfactory point of view. Their tender attention to each other, their simple devout gratitude for the mercies which they had experienced together, and their constant, but unaffected, propensity to impress on the mind and heart of a new friend, the deep sense, which they incessantly felt, of their mutual obligations to each other, afforded me very singular gratification."

The mutual happiness of the friends in each other's society was sadly dashed by Mrs. Unwin's second stroke of paralysis, which befel her one afternoon when Cowper and Hayley, after a morning passed in study, were out walking together. The melancholy news was communicated to them on their return by Mr. Samuel Greatheed, a dissenting minister of Newport Pagnell, who happened to be calling at the Lodge. Hayley was able to soothe his friend's agitation, and his tender attentions to the invalid endeared him still more to the poet. After spending more than a fortnight with his friends at Weston, he left them on the first of June, stealing quietly out of the house in the morning lest he should wake Mrs. Unwin, and leaving a pencilled note for Cowper in a song-book.

But before he departed it had been arranged between them that if Mrs. Unwin's health permitted it, she and Cowper should pay him a visit in the course of the summer at his home in Sussex. Hayley then resided at Eartham, a small estate delightfully situated on high ground about six miles from Chichester and five from Arundel. He had inherited the property

from his father, and had enlarged the house and embellished the garden. The pleasure-grounds, interspersed with rural grottoes and ivied seats, occupied three sides of a hill crowned with an arbour. House and grounds commanded beautiful views over a deep fertile valley enclosed by wooded hills, and away to the sea, nine miles distant, and the Isle of Wight looking like a thick cloud on the horizon. Gibbon, who visited Hayley at Eartham, and whose portrait hung in the library, called the place a little Paradise.

As the summer wore on, Mrs. Unwin's health gradually improved, and in spite of many fears and misgivings on Cowper's part, it was finally decided that they should go together to Eartham at the beginning of August. It was a tremendous undertaking for two people who had lived so quiet and secluded a life, and had never been more than a few miles distant from home for many years. A coach and four was sent from London to convey them. Johnny of Norfolk, Cowper's man-servant Samuel Roberts, his wife, and the little dog Beau, went with them. At eight o'clock in the morning of the first of August 1792 the coach drew up at the door of the Lodge. Samuel mounted the box, the rest got in, and they all drove off in good spirits. The journey occupied three days: the weather was very hot and the roads dusty. They lodged the first night at the Mitre in Barnet, where they found their friend Mr. Rose, who had walked thither from his house in Chancery Lane to meet them. His presence and conversation afforded a welcome relief to the weary and jaded spirits of the two unaccustomed travellers after their long confinement and jolting in the coach. Unfortunately the inn was very noisy, and Cowper

was driven almost to despair for Mrs. Unwin, lest she should get no rest. But though she was so weary that she could hardly speak, she slept well and rose refreshed. On the second day they dined at Kingston, where Cowper met his old friend, General Cowper, whom he had not seen for thirty years, and at night they lodged at Ripley, six miles from Guildford, in a quiet inn which they had all to themselves. There they both slept well and in the morning felt quite rested. Next day brought them to Eartham about ten o'clock at night. Darkness had fallen and the moon had risen when they crossed the Sussex downs, and Cowper, who had never seen a hill in his life, confesses that he was daunted by their "tremendous height" looming dim above him in the moonlight. Mrs. Unwin bore the journey better than Cowper dared to hope, and after the undisturbed slumbers of two good nights at Eartham she was more cheerful than she had been for many months.

In Hayley's hospitable home the two friends spent six happy weeks. The weather was at first fine, and in the brisker air and on the drier chalk soil Mrs. Unwin could, with support, walk better than at Weston. Sometimes she would pace the gravel walks of the hanging gardens; sometimes she would be drawn in a chaise by Hayley's son, Tom, and a servant lad, while Cowper or Johnny of Norfolk pushed behind; sometimes she would sit with Cowper in the bower on the top of the hill, tranquilly enjoying the distant prospects and the air blowing sweet and fresh. But she could not amuse herself by knitting or reading, for her sight remained imperfect and her fingers refused to perform their office. Cowper himself slept much better than at home and his appetite

was improved: Johnny of Norfolk thought him looking ten times younger than he had ever seen him before: he laughed from morning to night and was quite blooming and active. But surrounded by strange objects he found his attention so dissipated that he could hardly even write a letter; and he confessed himself so unaccountably local in the use of his pen that, like the man in the fable who could leap nowhere but at Rhodes, he was incapable of writing anywhere but at Weston.

However, he found plenty of occupation. The morning hours which could be spared for books were chiefly devoted to revising and correcting, with Hayley's help, all the translations which he had made of Milton's Latin and Italian poems for the projected edition of his works; and after dinner the friends generally amused themselves with composing jointly a rapid metrical version of Andreini's *Adamo,* an Italian drama published at Milan in 1613, which Hayley, following a hint of Voltaire's, supposed to have influenced Milton's choice of the subject for his great epic. Cowper, too, gave some time to sitting for his likeness to the painter Romney, who was among the guests at Eartham. The portrait, drawn in crayons, was esteemed by his friends very like. It is perhaps the best known of the three portraits of the poet. Shortly before his departure for Eartham he had been painted by Abbot, and in the following year he was painted by Lawrence.

Among the guests at Eartham during Cowper's stay was Mrs. Charlotte Smith, who was then engaged in writing her best novel, *The Old Manor House.* The early part of the day she devoted to composition in her own room, and in the evening she read to the

assembled party what she had written, charming her hearers by the simplicity and grace of her elocution and delivery. Cowper repeatedly declared that among his early associates, some of whom prided themselves on rapid composition, he knew of none who could have composed so rapidly and well. Another visitor who came to Eartham to meet Cowper was his correspondent the Rev. James Hurdis, rector of Bishopsgate in Sussex. Deeply affected by the death of his sister, he had resigned his living and was about to settle at Oxford, where he afterwards became Professor of Poetry. He and Cowper met at Eartham for the first and only time. Nor among the friends gathered at Hayley's pleasant home should Cowper's little dog, Beau, be forgotten. He had ridden in the coach with his master from Weston, and when Hayley, his son Tom, and the painter, Romney, set off to the sea to bathe, Beau went with them. Whether he enjoyed battling with the salt waves on the beach as much as swimming in the sluggish waters of the Ouse and gathering water-lilies on its calm bosom, is not recorded by history.

A greater contrast can hardly be conceived than that which was presented by these peaceful scenes at Eartham, and the scenes of tumult and horror which were then being enacted at Paris, whither Cowper's friends the Throckmortons had gone on a visit. For Paris was then at the height of the revolutionary frenzy. While the poet worked at his books with Hayley in the quiet library with its windows looking away over the beautiful landscape, or accompanied Mrs. Unwin in her walks in the garden, or sat with her in the arbour, fanned by the fresh breezes from the distant sea, the palace of the Tuileries was being

stormed, the Swiss Guard cut to pieces, the King and Queen made captive, and the dreadful September massacres were being perpetrated at the prisons. It was with a great sense of relief that Cowper learned that Sir John and Lady Throckmorton had quitted Paris two days before the terrible tenth of August.

So in happy social intercourse, literary occupation, and enjoyment of nature the weeks at Eartham glided pleasantly away. But the days were shortening, the autumn was advancing, the weather after the first fortnight had turned wet and stormy, and Cowper began to long to be at home again. The beautiful scenery and manifold charms of Eartham, he assures his correspondents, had not alienated his affections from the peaceful, though less splendid, Weston; the prospects which met his eye from every window, of woods like forests and hills like mountains, rather deepened than alleviated his natural melancholy, and he preferred the snug concealment of the Buckinghamshire village, which to him was the dearest spot on earth. So on the seventeenth of September the two friends set out for home. With a heavy heart Cowper took leave of Hayley, with a heavy heart he bade farewell to Tom at the foot of the chalk hill; but soon after his troubles gushed from his eyes, and then he was better. They spent four days on the return journey, for it had been agreed that they should dine one day with the poet's kinsman, General Cowper, and for that purpose it was necessary that they should pass a night at Kingston, near which the General lived. Cowper looked forward to the visit with great trepidation of spirits; but it passed off well, the two old friends parted, never to meet again, and Cowper and Mrs. Unwin returned more cheerfully in the dark to

Kingston. That night they rested well, and next morning soon after eight set off for London, which Cowper was to look upon also for the last time. At ten in the morning they arrived at Mr. Rose's door in Chancery Lane, drank chocolate with him, and proceeded on their journey, Mr. Rose riding with them as far as St. Albans. From there they met with no impediment ; in the dark and in a storm they reached their own back door at eight o'clock at night.

Soon after their return Cowper attempted to settle down to his task work at Milton, but it was to little purpose. The stream of his genius refused to flow in a prescribed channel : his Pegasus would not gallop under a bit and snaffle. In vain did he set his teeth and sit down to his desk with a good pen, a full ink-bottle, and a clean sheet of paper spread out before him : after writing and blotting a few lines he had to relinquish the attempt. The ghost of Milton seemed to haunt him and to goad him with continual reproaches for his neglect. He turned from the ungrateful task and buried himself in a revision of his Homer, which was for him a labour of love to be performed of his own free will and at his own time, not a matter of contract to be executed to date for a bookseller. In order that he might give the whole of the day to waiting on Mrs. Unwin, who in the enfeebled state of her body and mind needed and exacted all his attention, he used to rise at six and fag at Homer, fasting, till eleven o'clock, when he breakfasted. In winter he was up before daybreak while the owls were still hooting, and he sat by the window to catch the first glimmer of daylight, sometimes so cold that the pen slipped from his benumbed fingers. When the weather was fair, he regularly walked with Mrs. Unwin in the orchard

at the back of the house, where he had made a new path sheltered from the north and facing the south-western sun. But Mrs. Unwin was now so crippled that on these walks she had always to be supported between two and could only creep. In the evening he read to her his revised translation of Homer or some other book, such as Baker's *Chronicle,* in which he hoped in time to be as well versed as Sir Roger de Coverley, who used to keep the book lying on his hall window and occasionally unbend his mind, after the serious business of hunting foxes or sentencing poachers, by perusing the annals of his country.

The reason which induced Cowper to revise his Homer was one, he said, which any poet may guess if he will only thrust his hand into his pocket. At the same time, in deference to criticisms which had been passed on his translation, he attempted to adapt it to the over-delicate taste of the day by rendering the Latinisms into plain English, by expunging the occasional inversions which had given dignity to the verse, and by planing down the rougher lines, which the poet himself had deemed indispensable to secure variety of cadence. When all these changes had been made, he hoped to give to far the greater number of his verses a flow as smooth as oil, to convert the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* into plain turnpike, along which the most fastidious or squeamish reader might glide without experiencing a single jolt to distract his attention or disturb his slumber. Of this excessive smoothness of versification Cowper himself decidedly disapproved. " A critic of the present day ", he says, " serves a poem as a cook serves a dead turkey, when she fastens the legs of it to a post, and draws out all the

sinews. For this we may thank Pope ; but unless we could imitate him in the closeness and compactness of his expression, as well as in the smoothness of his numbers, we had better drop the imitation, which serves no other purpose than to emasculate and weaken all we write. Give me a manly, rough line, with a deal of meaning in it, rather than a whole poem full of musical periods, that have nothing but their oily smoothness to recommend them ! "

But while in his Homer, as in all his original poems, Cowper took the utmost pains to satisfy his own fine sense of literary workmanship, and to meet all reasonable and even some unreasonable demands of criticism, he never replied to any of his critics in print. Like another wise and magnanimous man, the target of many envenomed shafts — David Hume — he disdained to engage in the squabbling and scuffling, the clouting of heads and the clawing of faces, which goes by the name of literary controversy.[1] With a sensitiveness and delicacy of nature more than feminine, he happily combined a robust and manly stráin of thought which made him rise superior to petty wounds that would have rankled in weaker natures. His equanimity was never ruffled, or at all events never seriously disturbed, by the attacks of critics. He could afford to disregard them and to bide his time. *His* works will last with the English language : *their* criticisms have long been forgotten.

Cowper had other and deeper than pecuniary motives for applying himself zealously to Homer.

[1] " Answers by Reverends and Right Reverends came out two or three in a year ; and I found, by Dr. Warburton's railing, that the books were beginning to be esteemed in good company. However, I had a fixed resolution, which I inflexibly maintained, never to reply to any body ; and not being very irascible in my temper, I have easily kept myself clear of all literary squabbles" (DAVID HUME, *My Own Life*).

The occupation served to divert his mind for a time from sad sights and melancholy reflections. His spirits were low, and as time went on they sank lower and lower. Even shortly after his return from Eartham he wrote to Hayley in a tone of despondence that all his sprightly chords seemed broken; he thought that perhaps the approach of winter was the cause, but alas! spring and summer were to bring few joys to him again. No doubt a principal source of his unhappiness was the spectacle, always before his eyes, of Mrs. Unwin's steady decline. Her eyes and her fingers never recovered the powers they had lost by the second stroke of palsy. She never knitted again. The knitting-needles, once so shining, now rusted unused. She who had been wont to rise by candle light because the daylight was not long enough for the important business of mending stockings and other housewifely cares, now sat in her corner silent, with idle hands, gazing at the fire. For a while Cowper cheated, or tried to cheat, himself with the hope that she would still recover what she had lost, that she would yet read and work again as of old. But at last he saw that the hope was vain, and wrote the pathetic verses, *To Mary*, which will embalm her memory and his so long as the English language endures. They are believed to be the last original poem which he composed at Weston.

It would have been well for her and for him if mere bodily weakness had been the worst that befel Mrs. Unwin in the evening of her days; but unhappily with the decay of her faculties her character underwent a great change, and she who for years had found all her happiness in ministering to her afflicted friend, and seemed to have no thought but for his welfare,

now became querulous and exacting, forgetful of him and mindful apparently only of herself. Unable to move out of her chair without help, or to walk across the room unless supported by two people, her speech at times almost unintelligible, she deprived him of all his wonted exercises, both bodily and mental, as she did not choose that he should leave her for a moment, or ever use a pen or a book except when he read to her. To these demands he responded with all the devotion of gratitude and affection; he was assiduous in his attentions to her, but the strain told heavily on his strength.

It is no wonder that in these melancholy circumstances the oppression of spirits under which he had laboured for so many years should grow ever heavier. In one of his letters he mentions that he suffered from a dejection such as he had never known since he commenced author, except when he was absolutely laid by. In another he speaks of rising in the morning "like an infernal frog out of Acheron, covered with the ooze and mud of melancholy"; in another he says that he seems to himself to be scrambling always in the dark, among rocks and precipices, without a guide, but with an enemy ever at his heels, ready to push him headlong. Above all, his religious delusion rose to a pitch of horror which threatened to overcast his whole mental horizon, and to extinguish the last glimmerings of reason and hope. He was haunted with forebodings of some overwhelming evil: his imagination was terrified by an endless train of horrible phantoms: he suffered agonies of despair. His dreams were frightful. One night, for instance, he seemed to be taking a final leave of his dwelling and of everything with which he had been most familiar, on the evening

before his execution. He felt the tenderest regret at the separation, and looked about for something durable to carry with him as a memorial. The iron hasp of the garden door presenting itself, he was on the point of taking that; but recollecting that the heat of the fire in which he was going to be tormented would fuse the metal, and that it would therefore only serve to increase his insupportable misery, he left it, and awoke in all the horror with which the reality of the visionary terrors could have filled him. With such extremities of torture could a gloomy religious creed rack the mind of one of the best and most innocent men who ever dignified and beautified our earth by their presence.

No doubt the mental decay of Mrs. Unwin was one of the causes which contributed most powerfully to plunge Cowper into this abysm of misery. It was not merely that he was doomed daily and hourly to witness sufferings which wrung his heart and which he was powerless to relieve, but that he no longer received from her those pious consolations which her milder faith and her old unshaken trust in the divine goodness had enabled her to minister to him in his darkest hours. Thus deprived of spiritual guidance at home, he looked for it abroad, and unhappily he found it in Samuel Teedon, the pious, ignorant, foolish, self-sufficient schoolmaster of Olney, whose clumsy compliments, clownish manners, dull conversation, and ridiculous accounts of his petty ailments Cowper in his happier days had not failed to make the theme of delicate banter. This awkward booby, this presumptuous ass, whose piety, if it was sincere, was perhaps not wholly disinterested, since he received through Cowper's agency a regular allowance in

money, which he liberally repaid in prayer, was now consulted by the poet and Mrs. Unwin as a sort of divine oracle. When Cowper had had a particularly bad dream, or on waking in the morning imagined he heard voices speaking to him, he inquired of the Lord by the mouth of Samuel Teedon as to what these things might mean, and in due time received gracious and reassuring answers. When he hesitated about going on with the edition of Milton, which failed so miserably, the case was laid before the schoolmaster, who, after spreading it out as usual on the mercy-seat, announced that the Lord encouraged him to proceed "by shining on his addresses, and quickening him by his word". The letters which Cowper wrote to this poor driveller are melancholy witnesses to the wreck of a fine intellect; and in reading them we cannot but wish that when he sought the Lord at the schoolhouse of Olney, a voice had answered him as Colonel White answered Barebones's Parliament when they told him that they were seeking the Lord: "Then you may go elsewhere, for to my certain knowledge, He has not been here these many years."

So things went from bad to worse at Weston. To add to all their other troubles pecuniary anxieties were creeping in on them. Neither of the two friends was now able to take charge of their domestic affairs, and though Mrs. Unwin persisted in keeping the purse-strings in her poor feeble hands, there was no proper check on the household expenditure. Unworthy objects of their bounty took advantage of their weakness. All went to wrack and ruin.

Yet some temporary alleviation of their sorrows was afforded; a last gleam of sunset light shone on

the sad household at Weston, with the visit of friends in the autumn of 1793. Mr. Rose arrived early in October, bringing with him the painter, Lawrence, to whom Cowper sat for his portrait. Mr. Rose had been commissioned by Lord Spencer to invite Cowper and his guests to his seat of Althorp in Northamptonshire, where the historian, Gibbon, was about to pay a long visit. The invitation was attractive, and all Cowper's guests urged him to go; but the constitutional shyness of the poet conspired with the infirm state of Mrs. Unwin's health to prevent him from meeting his famous contemporary. He sent a polite refusal through Mr. Rose. A few days after Mr. Rose's arrival, Johnny of Norfolk, now the Reverend John Johnson, joined the party at Weston, and early in November Hayley came on his second visit. He found Cowper apparently well and enlivened by the society of his two favourite friends, Johnson and Rose. The poet still possessed completely all the admirable faculties of his mind and all the native tenderness of his heart; yet there was something indescribable in his appearance which alarmed Hayley with apprehensions of coming evil. During his visit the two authors kept each other busy, Cowper revising Hayley's *Life of Milton*, and Hayley doing the same for his friend's Homer, while Mrs. Unwin sat in her corner by the fire, sometimes silent, listening to the patter of the rain on the windows, sometimes laughing at the two friends, or interrupting them with a question or a remark, sometimes, when no heed was paid to her, holding a conversation with herself.

When Hayley had gone after a fortnight's visit, Lady Hesketh arrived about the middle of November.

Knowing the terrible change which had taken place in Mrs. Unwin, and how severely it must have affected Cowper, she found him better than she expected. But the blow, which the watchful Hayley had apprehended, fell on the poet in the second week of January 1794, and broke him finally. His spirits wholly deserted him. He ceased to work and to correspond with his friends. For six days he sat " still and silent as death ", and took no other food during that time than a morsel of bread dipped in wine and water. When every other remedy had failed, the medical attendant suggested that, as the only remaining chance, Mrs. Unwin should invite him to go out with her. She was induced, not without the exercise of tact and management, to make the experiment, and observing that it was a fine morning, said she should like to try to walk. Cowper at once rose, took her by the arm, and the spell which had bound him to his chair was broken.

Yet though he lived, no improvement took place in his mental condition. The arrival of Hayley in the spring, who came at much personal inconvenience to attend to his unhappy friend, seemed to give no pleasure to the sufferer ; he testified not the least glimmering of satisfaction at the appearance of a guest whom he used to receive with the most lively expressions of affectionate delight. During Hayley's stay a letter came from Lord Spencer announcing that it was His Majesty's intention to grant Cowper a pension of three hundred pounds a year for the residue of his life. But the news came too late to bring him the smallest comfort.[1] As time went on, in spite of

[1] The official document recording the grant is now exhibited in Cowper's house at Olney. It is signed by George the Third and Pitt. The pension was to date from July 5, 1794.

the unremitting attentions of Lady Hesketh, who stayed at Weston and devoted herself to the care of the two suffering friends, Cowper grew rather worse than better. He hardly ate, he was worn to a shadow, he did nothing but pace incessantly up and down in his study or his bedroom : he lived in a constant state of terror dreadful to behold, expecting daily and even hourly to be carried off by the Devil. This lasted for about eighteen months from the spring of 1794 till the latter end of July 1795. Then the Rev. John Johnson came to Weston from Norfolk, and with affectionate solicitude and tact persuaded the two invalids to accompany him on a visit to Norfolk, in the hope that a complete change of scene might be beneficial to both. Cowper was reluctant to leave the beautiful and peaceful Weston, to which, in spite of all he had suffered there, his heart clung with constant affection. He had a presentiment, which proved true, that he should see it no more ; and on a panel of the window shutter in his bedroom—the bedroom overlooking the quiet garden where he had so often walked with Mrs. Unwin—he wrote in pencil the sad lines :

> " Farewell, dear scenes, for ever closed to me ;
> Oh, for what sorrows must I now exchange ye ! " [1]

From Weston the party drove through Bedford without stopping, and spent the first night of the journey at the quiet little country town of St. Neots. There in the moonlight Cowper walked up and down with his kinsman in the churchyard, conversing composedly and almost cheerfully on the subject of

[1] The panel has been removed from the house at Weston and is now exhibited at the poet's house at Olney. The inscription is blurred but still legible.

Thomson's *Seasons*; and there, with the moonlight sleeping on its calm water, he saw for the last time his beloved Ouse.

In August, thinking that the invalids might benefit by sea air, Mr. Johnson took them to the village of Mundsley on the Norfolk coast. The cliffs there are high, the sands firm and level, and pacing on them the poet, if he could not recover his lost peace of mind, seemed to be soothed by the monotonous sound of the breakers. But his heart went back to Weston, and in a few letters written by him from Mundsley, he speaks of the dear village with fond regret. After various changes of abode the invalids finally settled with Mr. Johnson at his house in East Dereham. There, a few months after their settlement, Mrs. Unwin died on the seventeenth of September 1796, in her seventy-second year. Cowper was too sunk in melancholy even to take notice of her last illness; yet he must have been aware of it, for on the morning of her death, when the servant opened his window, he asked her, "Sally, is there life above stairs?" He went to her bedside as usual after breakfast that morning, then he returned to the room below and requested Mr. Johnson to read to him Miss Burney's novel *Camilla*. The reading was soon interrupted, and Mr. Johnson was beckoned out of the room to learn that all was over. The news affected Cowper so little, that after hearing it he allowed his kinsman to resume the reading of the novel. But when they led him into the chamber of death, and he saw her lying on the bed, for ever still, he gave way to a burst of emotion. Then he quitted the room and never spoke of her again. They buried her in Dereham churchyard at night by torchlight, lest the

sight and sounds of the last sad procession should agitate him unduly.

He lingered for a few years more, always plunged in the deepest, the most hopeless melancholy. Yet he allowed them to read to him, and he listened to his own poems in silence; only he forbade them to read to him *John Gilpin*. He was even induced to resume his long-interrupted revision of Homer, and he seemed calmer while he was engaged in the old familiar task; his very breathing was observed to be longer and easier while he sat with bowed head over his desk. Having once begun, he worked steadily, and completed the revision on the eighth of March 1799. A few days later he wrote his last original poem, *The Castaway*, founded on an incident in Anson's *Voyages* which he had read long before. His work was now done, and the hour of rest was not far off. At the end of January 1800, symptoms of dropsy appeared in his feet and ankles, and gradually increased. By the end of February he ceased to come downstairs; by the end of March he was confined to his bedroom. When a doctor asked him how he felt, he answered, "I feel unutterable despair." The night before he died, being very weak, they offered him a cordial, but he rejected it, saying, "What can it signify?" They were his last words. Next morning, Friday, the twenty-fifth day of April 1800, there was death on his face, but he survived till five o'clock in the afternoon, when his long sufferings and sorrows quietly ceased. All that is mortal of him rests in Dereham church, not far from the dust of Mary Unwin. Over his grave Lady Hesketh caused a monument to be erected, and Hayley composed for it a copy of verses containing a tribute to his departed

friend, a tribute which all who know and love Cowper will acknowledge to be just :

"Ye, who with warmth the public triumph feel
Of talents dignified by sacred zeal,
Here, to devotion's bard devoutly just,
Pay your fond tribute due to COWPER'S dust!
England, exulting in his spotless fame,
Ranks with her dearest sons his favourite name.
Sense, fancy, wit, suffice not all to raise
So clear a title to affection's praise;
His highest honours to the heart belong:
His virtues form'd the magic of his song."

II

WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH

By the death of William Robertson Smith this country has lost one of its greatest scholars and ablest men. No one could have been brought even casually into contact with him without feeling that he was in the presence of a remarkable man. The extent and accuracy of his information on almost any topic that might be started, the freshness and originality of his views, the electric quickness of his apprehension, the vivacity and energy of his manner, the ease, precision, and force with which he expressed himself, combined with the physical characteristics of the man — the slight, almost puny, yet sinewy and vigorous frame, the eager, expressive face, the high, piercing intonation of his voice — made up a personality which, once seen, was not easily forgotten. But it was reserved for those whom he honoured with his friendship to know that, with a lucidity of intellect which no sophistry could impose upon, and a firmness of character which nothing could daunt, he united a perfect sweetness and openness of disposition, and an unfailing cheerfulness and buoyancy of temper, which rendered him the most delightful of friends and companions, and supported him at last through years of ill-health and severe physical pain with a constancy not less than heroic.

But it is not my intention to attempt an analysis

of Robertson Smith's character. Rather I would endeavour to indicate the scope and importance of the work which he accomplished and initiated. It seems the more desirable to do so because the real significance of his life-work has been to a certain extent obscured by his versatility, by the many parts he played, and by the conspicuous ability which he displayed in all of them. To the majority of his fellow-countrymen in Scotland he was known chiefly as a controversialist, who vindicated the right of free historical inquiry against the narrow dogmatism of theologians who would have stifled the quest for truth as dangerous, presumptuous, and profane. To Orientalists at home and abroad he was known primarily as one of the best Semitic scholars of the day. And to the reading public in this country and America his name was perhaps most familiar as that of the editor of the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.[1]

In all these capacities Robertson Smith did valuable work. His controversy with the Free Church, though it ended in his removal from the Chair of Hebrew which he occupied in the Free Church College at Aberdeen, was of immense public service in promoting a more liberal and rational tone of thought on theological subjects, not in the Free Church only but in Scotland generally. Of his contributions to Semitic scholarship it is not for me to speak; their value has been attested by some of the most distinguished of living or recently deceased Orientalists, as well as by the successive calls which he received to fill, first the Lord Almoner's Readership in Arabic, and afterwards the Professorship of Arabic,

[1] The reference is to the Ninth Edition (Edinburgh and London, 1875–1899), which was the latest edition at the time (1894) when this essay was written.

in the University of Cambridge. But of Robertson Smith's qualifications as editor of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* I may venture to speak from personal knowledge, as I lived on terms of intimacy with him during the latter years of his editorship, and was privileged to contribute some articles to the book. He seemed then to me, as I believe he must have seemed to most of the contributors, an absolutely ideal editor for such a work. The range and exactness of his knowledge were such as, in the course of a life mostly spent at the Universities, I have never known equalled or even approached. The lightning-like rapidity and penetration of his mind, which led him straight to the heart of a subject through a maze of bewildering details, were also, in my experience, unique, and did at least as much as his immense learning to fit him for carrying through the press a work which aims at being a clear and comprehensive summary of human knowledge. To these qualifications he added an unfailing tact and courtesy, combined with perfect firmness and decision, in dealing with men ; a practical sagacity and good sense which made him on all subjects the oracle of his friends ; and an aptitude for business to which his publisher has recently borne the most emphatic testimony. Any notice of Robertson Smith's multifarious activity would be incomplete which did not mention that he held for several years the important post of University Librarian at Cambridge, and that in his younger days he acted as assistant and demonstrator to the distinguished professor of Natural Philosophy or Physics at the University of Edinburgh, Professor Tait. In this last capacity it has been said of Smith that " his deftness at experiments and clearness of exposition

were quite extraordinary, and the man commanded almost as much admiration from the students as did the master, which is saying a good deal". The attention which in these early days he paid to mathematical physics bore permanent fruit in the publication of some mathematical papers which are still, I understand, regarded as classical by mathematicians.

Yet when we have enumerated all these varied capacities in which Robertson Smith did so much admirable work, we have still not touched on the side of his mental activity which was most productive of important results, and by which he will be best remembered by posterity. It was by his researches into the history of religion in general and of the Semitic religions in particular that Robertson Smith has influenced most deeply, if not as yet most obviously, the thought of this generation; and so numerous and fruitful are the lines of inquiry which he struck out that his influence is likely to grow rather than diminish for some time to come. The method which in his hands proved so powerful an instrument in opening up new and rich veins of thought was what is known as the comparative method. As few, perhaps, even of educated readers have a definite notion of the principles of the comparative method in its application to the study of religion, and of its bearing on many profound practical problems which are pressing on us for solution now, and which loom still larger in the future, some general observations on the subject may not be out of place here, in so far as they enable the reader to apprehend more clearly Robertson Smith's place in the rapidly moving stream of contemporary thought.

The idea of regarding the religions of the world

not dogmatically but historically—in other words, not as systems of truth or falsehood to be demonstrated or refuted, but as phenomena of consciousness to be studied like any other aspect of human nature—is one which seems hardly to have suggested itself before the nineteenth century. Certainly the systematic development of the conception is a product of that unparalleled analytic or scientific activity which in the course of the present century [1] has enlarged enormously the boundaries of knowledge. Now when, laying aside as irrelevant to the purpose in hand the question of the truth or falsehood of religious beliefs, and the question of the wisdom or folly of religious practices, we examine side by side the religions of different races and ages, we find that, while they differ from each other in many particulars, the resemblances between them are numerous and fundamental, and that they mutually illustrate and explain each other, the distinctly stated faith and circumstantial ritual of one race often clearing up ambiguities in the faith and practice of other races. Thus the comparative study of religion soon forces on us the conclusion that the course of religious evolution has been, up to a certain point, very similar among all men, and that no one religion, at all events in its earlier stages, can be fully understood without a comparison of it with many others.

Regarded thus far, the comparative study of religion possesses a purely historical or antiquarian interest. It explains what the religious beliefs and practices of mankind have been and are, but it supplies no answer to the questions, Are these beliefs true?

[1] This notice of Robertson Smith's work was written and published in 1894, soon after his lamented death.

Are these practices wise? But though it cannot answer these questions directly, it often furnishes us indirectly with at least a probable answer to them; for it proves that many religious doctrines and practices are based on primitive conceptions which most civilized and educated men have long agreed in abandoning as mistaken. From this it is a natural and often a probable inference that doctrines so based are false, and that practices so based are foolish. It should be observed, however, that this inference, though natural and often probable, is never necessary and certain, because a belief may be true and a practice may be wise although the particular reasons assigned for holding the belief and observing the practice may be false. Multitudes of true beliefs and salutary customs have been and are daily defended by arguments which are absurd. The difference in this respect between a true and a false belief, and between a wise and a foolish practice, is merely that some good reason has been or may be found for the one, whereas no good reason has been or, so far as human foresight extends, is likely to be discovered for the other. Thus the proof that a belief is false or a practice foolish can never be complete or final, because it is always possible to allege that excellent reasons for it may exist which have hitherto eluded the scrutiny of our limited intelligence. The plea is quite irrefutable. But for all practical purposes we are perfectly justified in stigmatizing as false or foolish a belief or practice for which all the reasons hitherto adduced have proved, on a careful and dispassionate examination, to be mistaken. Now the careful and dispassionate analysis to which the comparative study of religion subjects the religious beliefs and practices of mankind, leads inevitably to

the conclusion that a great proportion of them are false and foolish, in the limited and provisional sense that no good reason has hitherto been adduced for any of them. And as the rules of conduct which have guided and still guide men in the affairs of life are to a large extent deduced from religious or theological premises, it follows that the comparative study of religion, in so far as it invalidates these premises, calls for a reconsideration of the speculative basis of ethics as well as of theology.

Thus a writer like Robertson Smith, whose genius and learning have greatly accelerated the progress of this study, especially in its application to the Semitic religions, is a force to be reckoned with in estimating the drift of thought in this generation. Both by training and by nature he was admirably equipped for the task which he accomplished. His wide and exact knowledge of Semitic literature and his travels in Semitic lands laid the solid foundation of his intimate familiarity with Semitic religion and life; and his friendship with the late J. F. McLennan, whose acquaintance he was fortunate enough to make during his student days at Edinburgh, early revealed to him the full importance of the comparative method as applied to the investigation of primitive society and religion. The influence which McLennan, the founder of the comparative school of sociology in this country, exercised over Robertson Smith, was deep and lasting. It permeated his whole way of regarding the origins of society and religion, and may be traced in all his more important writings on these subjects, most conspicuously in his *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, which is in the main an application of McLennan's general principles to the particular field

of early Arabian society. But Robertson Smith was anything but one of those writers who merely sort out facts under headings traced for them by others. The native force and originality of his mind were such that, to whatever study he might have devoted himself, he could hardly have failed of carrying it to a point farther than had been reached by his predecessors. If we seek to analyse the special qualities by virtue of which he did so much to advance the study of comparative religion, they seem to resolve themselves into great fertility of ideas and a vivid historical imagination, fed by a memory stored with a prodigious array of facts and kept under strict control by an unvarying soundness and sobriety of judgement. This coolness and sobriety of judgement, all the more remarkable in a man of his eager, fervid temperament, was one of the leading characteristics of his mind. He never lost touch of the real world, never allowed his imagination to stray into the realm of the vague and fanciful: all was clear, sharply defined, concrete. Hence his criticism was always wholesome and bracing: it pruned away what was extravagant, and made distinct what had been dim. He brought all theories—his own and those of others—to the touchstone of fact. If any one in his presence hazarded a speculation which lost sight of the realities of life, he was instantly recalled to them by Robertson Smith. Hence, too, though his intellect was of the grand order, always busied with large questions of history, life, and nature, it always moved within the limits within which evidence is attainable and knowledge possible to man. He seemed to turn instinctively from matters that lie beyond the scope of human knowledge, from those problems insoluble to human reason which have

exercised a morbid attraction on so many minds, and have been the theme of endless and heated, but always vain and fruitless, discussion through all the ages :

"Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy."

Thus with his concrete imagination and firm grasp of reality, Robertson Smith was eminently fitted to advance a study in which success largely depends on the student's power of picturing to himself how men have actually lived, thought, and acted in the past under all the complex conditions of real life. He saw that religion cannot properly be isolated from the other sides of human life, and treated as if it were independent of them ; that the nature and development of a people's religion are largely modified and determined by physical surroundings, material culture, manner of life, social and political organization, and relations with neighbouring peoples ; that all these things act and react upon each other, and must all be allowed for, if we would understand any one side of the complex product. In primitive society, indeed, this fusion of the religious with the other elements of human life is far more complete than in advanced societies. For the religion of the savage does for him what philosophy and science essay to do for civilized man ; it furnishes him with a general explanation of the processes of nature and his own being and destiny. Hence the life of the savage is saturated with it. By it he explains all events : on it he bases all his rules of conduct. He cannot separate it even in thought from the rest of his life : the distinction between religious and secular affairs, or between religion and morality, has no meaning for him. The progress of civilization tends to restrict the sphere of religion by

substituting natural for supernatural agencies as the immediate causes of events, and natural for supernatural sanctions as the immediate basis of ethics. But the student of early thought and custom must remember that religion as an element of society, though it is slowly precipitated by civilization, is held in solution by savagery, colouring and being coloured by all the other elements with which it is blent. No one was more keenly alive than Robertson Smith to this interpenetration of religion and other elements of primitive society. A fine instance of his habitual recognition of it is furnished by the comparison which he institutes between the evolution of religion in the East and in the West. He shows that at first, contrary to current notions, the Semitic and Greek religions ran on parallel lines, and that their subsequent wide divergence from each other was produced, not, as is commonly supposed, by any innate tendency to monotheism on the one side and to polytheism on the other, but by the different courses taken by the evolution of political institutions in the East and the West, society gravitating to monarchy in the East and to aristocracy and republicanism in the West, and the gods as usual being created in the likeness of their worshippers. The comparison is merely a sketch, but the lines are drawn with the hand of a master.

Unfortunately too much of Robertson Smith's work remains in the condition of sketches which he did not live to complete. With his keen sight and comprehensive glance he surveyed wide regions of religious history, mapped them out in the rough, and left others to fill in the details. To enumerate all the original contributions which he made to the comparative study of religion would be out of place here, even

if it were practicable. Time and research are needed to test the value and to ascertain the full bearings of many of them. But readers who happen to be unacquainted with his writings may fairly expect to be furnished with specimens of them. I will therefore mention two.

That mystical or sacramental sacrifices have played an important part in the history of many religions was first, I believe, pointed out by Robertson Smith. The peculiarity of these sacrifices is that in them the victim slain is an animal or a man whom the worshippers regard as divine, and of whose flesh and blood they sometimes partake, either actually or symbolically, as a solemn form of communion with the deity. The conception of such a sacrifice and the observance of such a communion are, of course, familiar to us in the Christian doctrine of the Atonement and the Christian sacrament of the Eucharist. But Robertson Smith was the first to show that conceptions and sacraments of this sort are not confined to Christianity, but are common to it with heathen and even savage religions. Whether he was right in tracing their origin to totemism may be questioned: the evidence thus far does not enable us to pronounce decisively. But that religious ideas and observances of this type are world-wide, and that they originated, not in an advanced, but in a low stage of society and in a very crude phase of thought, is not open to question. The discovery was Robertson Smith's, and it is of capital importance for the history of religion. Among the many questions which it raises, the one which will naturally interest Christians most deeply is, How are we to explain the analogy which it reveals between the Christian Atonement and Eucharist on the one side, and the mystical or sacra-

mental sacrifices of the heathen religions on the other? Robertson Smith's answer to this question was that the mystical sacrifices of the heathen foreshadowed in a dim and imperfect way the Christian conception of a divine Saviour who gives His life for the world. In his own words, "That the God-man dies for His people, and that His death is their life, is an idea which was in some degree foreshadowed by the oldest mystical sacrifices. It was foreshadowed, indeed, in a very crude and materialistic form, and without any of those ethical ideas which the Christian doctrine of the Atonement derives from a profounder sense of sin and divine justice. And yet the voluntary death of the divine victim, which we have seen to be a conception not foreign to ancient sacrificial ritual, contained the germ of the deepest thought in the Christian doctrine; the thought that the Redeemer gives Himself for His people, that 'for their sakes He consecrates Himself, that they also might be consecrated in truth'." [1]

Another important province in the history of religion which Robertson Smith was the first to explore is the religion of pastoral tribes. The conclusions which he arrived at, mainly from an analysis of Semitic sacrificial ritual, are strikingly confirmed by an induction from the facts of pastoral life as observed among rude pastoral tribes in various parts of the world, especially in Africa. He showed that among pastoral tribes the herds are commonly regarded as sacred, and that their slaughter is permitted only under exceptional circumstances, the tribesmen generally subsisting on the milk and on game. Now, as he pointed out, this veneration of pastoral tribes for

[1] *Religion of the Semites* (Edinburgh, 1889), p. 393. This passage is omitted in the second and revised edition of the book published posthumously in 1894.

their cattle probably explains many features in the religion and mythology of the civilized peoples of antiquity, all of whom seem to have passed through the pastoral stage on their progress upward from the hunting to the agricultural stage. Thus, for example, it probably explains the sanctity of the cow in the Iranian and Brahminical religions, and the worship of the bull-god Apis, the cow-goddess Isis-Hathor, and the ram-god Ammon in ancient Egypt. In ancient Greece it explains the legend of the Golden Age in so far as that legend represented primitive man as vegetarian, the legend being a reminiscence of a time when cattle were sacred and were not eaten. And among the civilized nations of antiquity in general, and the Semites in particular, it explains why the chief associations of the great deities were with the milk-giving animals—the cow, the sheep, and the goat.

These are only specimens of Robertson Smith's far-reaching discoveries in the field of primitive religion. His writings are storehouses of original and profound observations and fruitful suggestions. As such they will long be resorted to by students of religion, and it seems probable that much of the progress which, it is to be hoped, will be made in the study of religion in the immediate future, will consist in carrying out the lines of research which were indicated and initiated by him.

III

FISON AND HOWITT

Anthropology in general, and Australian anthropology in particular, has lately[1] suffered two very heavy losses by the deaths of the Rev. Lorimer Fison and Dr. A. W. Howitt, two old friends and colleagues, who passed away at an interval of a few months,—Mr. Fison dying in December 1907, and Dr. Howitt in March 1908. To their insight, enthusiasm, and industry we owe the first exact and comprehensive study of the social organization of the Australian tribes; and the facts which they brought to light, together with the explanations which they gave of them, have not only contributed to a better understanding of the Australian aborigines, but have shed much light on the early history of institutions in general, and especially of marriage.

Lorimer Fison was born on November ninth, 1832, in the picturesque village of Barningham in Suffolk.[2] His father was a prosperous landowner there till the repeal of the Corn Laws diminished the value of his property. With the help of a steward he farmed his own land and also some adjoining land,

[1] This notice was originally published in *Folk-Lore*, June 30, 1909.

[2] For the facts of Mr. Fison's life I am indebted mainly to his sister, Mrs. Potts (14 Brookside, Cambridge), and his daughter, Miss Fison (Essendon, Victoria, Australia). In addition to her own reminiscences Mrs. Potts has kindly given me access to some of her brother's letters, from which I have extracted some of the facts mentioned in the text.

which belonged to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. The father was a man of great integrity and nobility of character with a kind heart and a genial manner, all of which his son inherited from hin to the full. As there was neither a great landowne in the neighbourhood nor a resident rector, Mr. Fisor. ruled supreme in the little village, using his power both wisely and kindly. A man of deep piety, he was a friend of the Quaker, Joseph John Gurney, after whom he named one of his two sons. His sympathies were with that old school of Quakers in Norwich and also with the early Wesleyans, but he brought up his family in the Evangelical school of the Church of England. There is a beautiful window to his memory in the old village church. His wife was a daughter of the Rev. John Reynolds, whose translations of Fénelon, Massillon, and Bourdaloue were well known in their day. Educated by her father, Mrs. Fison inherited from him his love of languages and his literary taste. She assisted in her sons' education, preparing the Virgil lesson over night with the holiday tutor whom she had engaged for the boys, and striking out all passages which she did not wish them to read. To her Lorimer owed much of his fine character. She was something of a Roman mother, and believed that the strong instinct of hero-worship in human nature should be fostered in children from their earliest years. Accordingly, while her children were gathered round the board at their simple meals, she, sitting at the head of the table and looking stately and beautiful, would tell them stories of great men, who with heaven's help had worked for the good of mankind. The seed dropped on receptive soil and bore fruit, though perhaps not always of the

sort which the worthy lady desired; for Lorimer and his brother Joseph fought over their favourite heroes even in the nursery. The books she gave them to read were mostly the old English classics expurgated by her father's careful pen. *The Faerie Queen* was a living reality to the boys, and Lorimer personated its heroes with dauntless bravery. On the other hand, the virtuous hero of *The Pilgrim's Progress* was less to his taste; indeed it is to be feared that he found the foul fiend Apollyon the most attractive character in that edifying work; for, fired with emulation, he would "straddle quite over the whole breadth of the way", so far at least as his little legs allowed him to do so, and for lack of a flaming dart to hurl at Christian he would snatch a large gravy spoon from the nursery table and roar out in a terrible voice, "Here will I spill thy soul." When a righteous retribution overtook the counterfeit Apollyon for this or other escapades, his small brother and sister would stand one on either side of the sufferer and exhort him to fortitude, saying, "Be a Spartan, Lorry, be a Spartan!" And a Spartan, agreeably blent with the character of Apollyon, Lorry proved to be, for not a muscle of his little white face would twitch till the punishment was over. In the intervals between these heroic deeds and sufferings Lorry scoured the country round. There was not a stack of corn nor a tall tree in the neighbourhood on the top of which he had not perched; not a pond into which he had not waded to explore its living inhabitants. The old groom was kind to the children; but the steward frowned when Lorry and his young sister would gallop past with a clatter of hoofs at daybreak, mounted on forbidden horses, to ride five miles to the nearest post town for

the joy of placing the post-bag before their father at breakfast.

In time these youthful delights came to an end. Lorimer and Joseph were sent to school at Sheffield, where they had the benefit of an able staff of Cambridge masters. After leaving school Lorimer read for a year in Cambridge with Mr. Potts of Trinity College, whose edition of Euclid is well known. He entered the University in 1855, being enrolled as a student of Gonville and Caius College. But the spirit of adventure was too strong in him to brook the tame routine of a student's life, and after keeping only two terms, the Michaelmas term of 1855 and the Lent term of 1856, he left the University without taking a degree, and sailed for Australia to dig for gold. He was at the diggings when the news of his father's death reached him unexpectedly. It affected him deeply. In his distress he was taken to a mission meeting held in the open air, and there, under the double impression of sorrow and of the solemn words he heard, he fell to the ground and underwent one of those sudden conversions of which we read in religious history. Accordingly he left the gold-diggings in or about 1861, and repaired to the University of Melbourne, where the terms which he had kept at Cambridge were allowed to count, though even then he did not proceed to a degree. At Melbourne he joined the Wesleyan communion, and, hearing that missionaries were wanted in Fiji, he offered himself for the service. The offer was accepted; he was ordained a minister, and sailed for Fiji in 1863. He had previously married a lady of the Wesleyan Church, who survives him, together with a family of two sons and four daughters.

Mr. Fison laboured as a missionary in Fiji from

1863 to 1871, and again from 1875 to 1884. During the first of these periods he was appointed to the mission stations of Viwa, Lakemba, and Rewa; his name and that of his devoted wife are still household words there. Afterwards he acted as Principal of the Training Institution for natives in Navuloa, and his lectures were highly esteemed and treasured in memory by his students long after he had left Fiji. His frank, manly, cheery nature, ready sympathy, quick intelligence, and sound common-sense won him the love and confidency of natives and Europeans alike. Governors such as Sir William MacGregor and Sir J. B. Thurston treated him as a friend: Government officials in every department of the service regarded him as a safe and trustworthy guide in all matters affecting the relations of the Government with the natives; and merchants and planters, some of whom at the outset had not been very friendly to the mission, greeted him affectionately and welcomed him to their homes, when his big burly form appeared in Levuka; for he was a man of genial manners and a ready wit, sometimes flavoured with a touch of sarcasm. The natives loved him because they knew that he loved them; and, while he faithfully reproved them for their faults, he was lenient to all mistakes which sprang from ignorance or errors of judgement. A few kindly words, blent with a judicious touch of ridicule and an appeal to common-sense, were often more effectual than a stern reproof or the rigid exercise of Church discipline would have been. This account of Mr. Fison's missionary work in Fiji I have borrowed mainly from an obituary notice by his old and intimate friend, the experienced South Sea missionary, Dr. George Brown, who says of him:

"Dr. Fison and I were close friends for many

years, and during those years I had the privilege of sharing in his joys and of knowing more of his trials and difficulties perhaps than any other man. He never 'wore his heart upon his sleeve', and so his life often appeared to others to be easier and more free from trouble than it really was. He always kept a brave face to the world, and many even of his intimate friends never knew how hard a battle he had sometimes to fight. . . . I knew him in the Mission field, and on board ship, in his home at Essendon, about which I cannot trust myself to write, and in my own home. I have met him in counsel, and in our own Conferences ; have shared his joys and have been the confidant of his troubles and sorrows, and I always found him to be a devoted Christian, a man with a child-like heart in his relationship to God, a wise counsellor, a true and loyal friend, and one of the best missionaries whom God has ever given to our church."[1]

Among the features in Mr. Fison's character which commanded the respect of all who knew him were his transparent honesty, his readiness to acknowledge, indeed to proclaim on the housetops, any mistake which he had made, and, moreover, his absolute disinterestedness. When he lived as a missionary in Fiji he was repeatedly offered land by the natives, and he might easily have made large profits by accepting their offers and selling the land again to settlers. But he steadily refused to enrich himself by means which he regarded as injurious to the natives and inconsistent with his sacred profession. Once, as he was walking with a chief on the shore, the chief pressed him to accept land. Mr. Fison stopped, measured six feet or perhaps a

[1] "Lorimer Fison", by the Rev. George Brown, D.D., *Australasian Methodist Missionary Review*, Sydney, February 4, 1908, pp. 1, 3.

little more (for he was a tall man) on the sand, and said: "If I die in Fiji, you may give me so much land. I will not take more." [1] So he lived and died poor, but honoured.

Mr. Fison's intimate acquaintance with Fijian custom was of public service. When the Lands Commission was about to sit, he delivered a lecture at Levuka on the native system of land tenure in Fiji. The substance of it was published in *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute*,[2] and soon after by the British Government in a Blue Book. It was also translated into German, and published in one of the German official books at the time when the claims of German landowners in Fiji were under consideration. Many years later the Governor of Fiji, then Sir Henry M. Jackson, K.C.M.G., esteemed the treatise so highly that he caused it to be reprinted from Mr. Fison's manuscript in a fuller form at the Government Press; and in a despatch of July thirty-first, 1903, Mr. Chamberlain, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, wrote to the Governor: "I have read this valuable treatise with much interest. I entirely approve of your action in causing it to be reprinted by the Government Press, and I consider that the colony owes Dr. Fison a debt of gratitude for his kindness in recopying the original manuscript."

When the distinguished American ethnologist, Lewis H. Morgan, was collecting materials for his great work, *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*, he circulated a paper of questions

[1] Mr. Fison's opinion and practice in this matter were shared by the great majority of his fellow-missionaries in Fiji. Only three out of forty-three bought land. See *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. x. (1881), p. 352 note*.

[2] "Land Tenure in Fiji", *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. x. (1881), pp. 332-352.

very widely, and through the agency of Professor Goldwin Smith one of these papers reached Mr. Fison in Fiji. In answer to the questions he contributed a full and accurate account of the Fijian and Tongan systems of consanguinity and affinity to Morgan's famous book. The value and importance of this contribution were fully acknowledged by Morgan.[1] It speaks highly for Mr. Fison's scientific insight that he clearly perceived the far-reaching scope of Morgan's inquiries, and that accordingly, on his return to New South Wales in 1871, he set himself to investigate the systems of marriage and relationship of the Australian aborigines. In order to procure information on the subject he wrote to the chief Australian papers, inviting the co-operation of those who knew the natives. Some of his letters were published in the *Australasian*, and attracted the attention of Mr. A. W. Howitt, whose explorations both in Central and South-Eastern Australia had brought him into close contact with the aborigines. Hence the two men met and formed a deep and loyal friendship, which only ended with their lives. They now entered jointly into a comprehensive investigation of the social organization of the Australian tribes, prosecuting their inquiries as far as possible through personal intercourse with the natives, but also partly by correspondence; for they printed and circulated widely through the principal Australian settlements a list of questions touching the tribal organization and systems of consanguinity and affinity of the aborigines. Thus they accumulated a large body of facts illustrating many phases of savage life, and exhibiting some of the fundamental institutions of

[1] L. H. Morgan, *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*, p. 568 (*Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge*, vol. xvii., Washington, 1871).

the Australian tribes. The results of these inquiries, carried on for some years, were published jointly by the two friends in their well-known work *Kamilaroi and Kurnai* (Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, and Brisbane, 1880), so named after the two tribes, one in New South Wales, the other in Victoria, to which the authors had paid special attention. This important work, for which Lewis H. Morgan wrote an appreciative preface,[1] unquestionably laid the foundations of a scientific knowledge of the Australian aborigines, and its value in setting forth the wonderful social system, seemingly complex, confused, and casual, yet really clear, logical, and purposeful, of these savages, can hardly be overestimated. Viewed both in itself and in the light of the subsequent researches to which it gave birth, especially those of Spencer and Gillen in Central Australia, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai* is a document of primary importance in the archives of anthropology.

Not that all its theories have stood the test of time. Mr. Fison himself, with admirable candour, announced publicly from his presidential chair at a meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, that an elaborate theory which he had propounded in that book was "not worth a rush". As the words in which he did so are not only highly characteristic of the man, but contain a warning of permanent importance to anthropologists, especially to those of them who study savages at a safe distance, and have never perhaps seen one of them in their lives, though they may possibly have watched their images dancing silently in a cinematograph or heard the echo

[1] Mr. Fison had previously contributed information to L. H. Morgan's last book, *Ancient Society* (London, 1877), pp. 51, 403, etc. From one of Morgan's references to him (*op. cit.* p. 403, note 1) it appears that Mr. Fison had been at one time resident at Sydney.

of their voices chanting and whooping out of a phonograph, I will quote the passage entire for their benefit. Mr. Fison said: "In these investigations two things mainly are required—first, a patient continuance in the collecting of facts; and, secondly, the faculty of seeing in them what is seen by the natives themselves. We must ever remember that our mind-world is very different from theirs. It is not filled with the same images; it is not governed by the same laws. It is to theirs as the England of the present day is to the England of who shall say how many ages ago? The climate, the coast-line, the watersheds, the flora, the fauna—in short, nearly all the aspects of nature—are changed. It is to all intents and purposes another land. As to the former of these two requisites, one's natural tendency, especially in the beginning of the work, is to form a theory as soon as one has got hold of a fact; and, as to the latter, we are too apt to look at the facts in savagery from the mental standpoint of the civilized man. Both of these are extremely mischievous. They lead investigators into fatal mistakes and bring upon them much painful experience; for the pang attending the extraction of an aching double tooth is sweetest bliss when compared with the tearing up by the roots of a cherished theory. I speak feelingly here, because I can hold myself up as an awful warning against theory-making. To take one instance only. In *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*, the joint work of Mr. A. W. Howitt and myself, there is a long chapter containing a most beautiful theory of the Kurnai system, which I worked out with infinite pains. It accounts for that system so completely and so satisfactorily that the Kurnai ought to be ashamed of themselves for having been perverse enough to arrive

at their system by a different road, which further inquiry showed us most conclusively that they did. Students of anthropology who have read our work, and who still survive, will please accept this intimation that the theory aforesaid is not worth a rush." [1]

It is to be hoped that this warning will be laid to heart by all who view savages through a telescope, whether from a club or a college window. If our glass be a good one and we apply our eye to the end of it steadily, undistracted by the sights and sounds about us, we shall see and hear strange things, things very unlike those which may be seen and heard either in Pall Mall and Piccadilly or in the grassy courts and echoing cloisters of an ancient university town. We shall not see the rush of cabs, omnibuses, and motors, nor be stunned by their long continuous roar: we shall not see the ivy-mantled walls lapped by the sluggish stream, the old gardens dreaming in the moonlight of the generations that are gone: we shall not hear the drowsy murmur of fountains plashing in summer days or the tinkle of the chapel bell calling to prayer, when the shadows lengthen across the green-sward and in the west the stars begin to sparkle above the fading gold of evening. If we are really intent on knowing the truth, we must strive to dismiss or disregard these nearer, these familiar sights and sounds, whether harsh and ugly or beautiful and sweet, and to fix our thoughts on the strange and distant scene;

[1] *Report of the Fourth Meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, held at Hobart, Tasmania, in January*, 1892, Section G. Anthropology, *Address by the President*, the Rev. Lorimer Fison, M.A., Queen's College, University of Melbourne, pp. 150 *sq.* With reference to *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*, Mr. Fison adds in a note that "it is only bare justice to Mr. Howitt to note that nearly all the labour of collecting the Australian facts fell to his share, and that he did this work after the manner in which he does all other work undertaken by him. No higher praise could possibly be expressed."

and thus by long and patient effort we may come to see in the magic mirror of the mind a true reflection of a life which differs immeasurably from our own. Yet this reflection or picture must itself be pieced together by the imagination; for imagination, the power of inward vision, is as necessary to science as to poetry, whether our aim is to understand our fellowmen, to unravel the tangled skein of matter, or to explore the starry depths of space. Only we must remember that, if imagination is a necessary, it is not a perfect or infallible instrument of science: it is apt to take its colours from the eye that uses it, to tremble with every vibration that pulses along the nerves of the observer. These things cannot but trouble and distort the images which print themselves on our brain; yet they are inevitable, since we cannot get outside of ourselves and contemplate the world from the standpoint of a purely abstract intelligence. All we can do is to make allowance as far as possible for our individual upbringing, character, and surroundings, to calculate as exactly as we can the personal equation, and to correct our impressions accordingly. If we have done this, and if we are, like Mr. Fison, always ready to pull to pieces the old mental image, at whatever cost, and to build it up again on better evidence, then we have done all that is humanly possible to attain to the truth. When all is done, we may still be in error, but the error will be pardonable.

While Mr. Fison was pursuing his inquiries among the Australian tribes from 1871 to 1875, he was also engaged in ministerial work in New South Wales and Victoria. Returning to Fiji in 1875,[1] he resumed his

[1] When Mr. Fison left Australia in 1875 to return to Fiji, the Wesleyan Conference of Australia passed unanimously the following resolution: "In view of the Rev. L. Fison's receiving an appointment in Fiji from the

observations of native Fijian life, and contributed to *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* a series of valuable papers dealing with burial customs, land tenure, riddles, rites of initiation, and the classificatory system of relationship.[1] Many years afterwards Mr. Fison published a volume of Fijian stories with an introduction and notes illustrating some aspects of the native life and manners.[2]

From Fiji Mr. Fison returned to Victoria in 1884. Next year he resumed his ministerial duties, and continued to discharge them until 1888, when ill-health obliged him finally to resign them. In the same year (1888) he built, partly with borrowed capital, a house at Essendon, near Melbourne, where he resided with his wife and four unmarried daughters to the end of his life. The house was built for a school, and his daughters, accomplished and industrious ladies, taught pupils in it until new rules adopted by the State of Victoria rendered the house, in which Mr. Fison had sunk some of his small savings, unsuitable for the purpose. Meantime Mr. Fison laboured hard at journalism. From 1888 to within about three years of his death he edited the *Spectator*, a Melbourne paper published in connexion with the Wesleyan

Missionary Committee, this Conference takes the present opportunity of expressing its regret that his state of health is depriving the colonial work of so valuable a minister and pastor. It assures him of its confidence and affection, and of its admiration of his exposure and denunciation of the so-called Labour Traffic in the South Sea Islands, and it commends him and his family to the care of Almighty God."

[1] "Notes on Fijian Burial Customs", *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute, etc.* vol. x. (1881) pp. 137-149; "Land Tenure in Fiji", *ibid.* pp. 332-352; "On Fijian Riddles", *ibid.* vol. xi. (1882) pp. 406-410; "The Nanga, or Sacred Stone Enclosure, of Wainimala, Fiji", *ibid.* vol. xiv. (1885) pp. 14-31; "The Classificatory System of Relationship", *ibid.* vol. xxiv. (1895) pp. 360-371.

[2] *Tales from Old Fiji*, London, 1904.

Church. To a weekly paper, the *Australasian*, he contributed a series of articles on "The Testimony of Fijian Words", the substance of some of which he appears to have afterwards embodied in the introduction to his *Tales from Old Fiji*. He was one of the first Fellows of Queen's College in the University of Melbourne, and for some years he acted as Secretary to the College Council. Indeed, he had been instrumental with others in founding the College. From an American university he received an honorary degree of Master of Arts in recognition of his services to anthropology.[1] In January 1892, he presided over the Anthropological Section of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science at Hobart Town in Tasmania, and greatly enjoyed the fortnight's rest and the hospitalities he met with from the Governor, Sir Arthur Havelock (whom he had known in Fiji), the members of the Tasmanian Club, and others. It was the first holiday he had had for more than seven years, and even this he was only enabled to take through the liberality of a friend. Another pleasant break in his laborious life came in 1894, when he visited England once more, and attended the meeting of the British Association at Oxford as one of the representatives of Australian science. At the meeting he read a paper on the classificatory system of relationship, and made the acquaintance of a number of eminent men, including Max Müller and Professor E. B. Tylor. During this his last visit to England, Mr. Fison went to Chichester to see his good friend the Rev. Dr. R. H. Codrington, formerly a missionary of the Church of England to Melanesia, and one of the highest authori-

[1] This is mentioned by Mr. Fison in a letter written from Oxford, October 18, 1894. He does not mention the name of the university which bestowed on him this well-earned honour.

ties on the language and customs of the Melanesians. He also came to Cambridge for a few days, when I had the privilege of making his personal acquaintance. His frank, manly, genial nature won me at once, and we were friends to the end of his honoured and useful life. He wrote me many letters in the clear, crisp, graphic style which made all his letters a pleasure to read.

Returning to Australia he settled down again to the routine of journalism at his desk. How hard he worked to support his family may be partially gathered from one of those charming letters which down to the last he wrote to the sister who shared the dear memories of the happy youthful days at Barningham in Suffolk. In the same letter in which he tells his sister of the commendation bestowed by Mr. Chamberlain upon his treatise on the Fijian land system,[1] Mr. Fison writes thus: "There is no particular news; and even if there were, I have no time to tell it. I never was so hard wrought in my life as I have been of late. Sluicing on the diggings was hard enough, for you had to keep the sluice boxes full while the water was running; but it was over for the day when sundown came. My present work has no sundown." When Mr. Fison wrote thus he had nearly completed his seventy-first year. Not long afterwards his health, which under the pressure of hard work and domestic anxieties had been failing for some time, broke down completely. An affection of the heart necessitated absolute repose, and for the few remaining years of his life Mr. Fison was in body, though never in mind or spirit, a shattered invalid. Happily the country which he had served so well and so loyally did not

[1] See above, p. 297.

forget him in his poverty and old age. In the spring of 1905, at Mr. Balfour's recommendation, His Majesty the King was graciously pleased to recognize Mr. Fison's services to his country and to science by granting him a pension of £150 a year. So there was light at the evening-tide of a long and strenuous day.[1]

Though he could no longer work at the things he loved most, his interest in them never flagged to the end, and I still received from time to time letters written in his now tremulous hand, which proved that the keen intelligence was not blunted nor the warm heart grown cold. There was even an apparent slight recovery in his health. About a week before his death he and his beloved wife, herself an invalid for many years, were well enough to leave the house and attend a public gathering, where friends crowded round them and congratulated them on their appearing once more in their midst. But it was the last flicker of the expiring taper. Perhaps the excitement, combined with the great heat of the weather, for it was now the height of the torrid Australian summer, proved too much for his strength. He was taken suddenly ill, and lingered between life and death for some days, surrounded by his family and remaining conscious and calm. Sundown, the sundown for which in the gathering shadows he had longed, came at last on Sunday, December the twenty-ninth, 1907, when the labourer entered into his eternal rest.

[1] Perhaps without a breach of confidence I may be allowed to quote a fragment of one of Mr. Fison's letters which has been placed in my hands by his sister: "... looking than she was in her youth. She has been a good wife to me, and I thank God for her every day of my life. If we only had a small competence, we should toddle down the rest of the decline hand in hand with gladsome hearts." The beginning of the first sentence is lost; it seems to have referred to "a beautiful dream".

Alfred William Howitt was born at Nottingham in England in 1830.[1] His parents were William and Mary Howitt, the well-known and popular writers. The father, a native of the delightful little village of Heanor in Derbyshire, engaged in the business of an apothecary at Nottingham, but finally devoted himself to literature, pouring out a long series of volumes. Soon after his marriage Mr. Howitt and his wife made a tour on foot to Scotland, a rare, almost unprecedented, undertaking in those days. In 1840, when Alfred was ten years old, the parents went to Heidelberg for the education of their children, and remained about two years in Germany. Afterwards Alfred studied at University College, London. In June 1852, Mr. Howitt, accompanied by his two sons, Alfred and Charlton, sailed for Australia, ostensibly to visit his brother, Dr. Godfrey Howitt, then settled as a medical man in Melbourne, but perhaps also to see for themselves the new Land of Gold and to partake of its fabulous riches. They reached Melbourne after a three months' voyage, and purchasing a cart and horses journeyed up-country to the Ovens gold diggings. After about two years of toilsome digging and wandering in what was then a wild country, William Howitt, with his son Charlton, returned to England in 1854, leaving his other son, Alfred, then twenty-four years of age, behind him at Melbourne.

[1] For most of the facts in the following sketch of Dr. Howitt's life I am indebted to an obituary notice of him by his friend and disciple, Professor (now Sir) W. Baldwin Spencer, which appeared in *The Victorian Naturalist*, vol. xxiv. No. 12, April 1908. I have also made some use of an obituary notice published in the Australian paper, the *Argus*, Monday, March 9, 1908, p. 7. My notice of Dr. Howitt's explorations in Central Australia is taken mainly from his own reminiscences, as these have been graphically recorded by him in the address which he delivered as President of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science at Adelaide in 1907. The account of his last illness and death is derived from letters written to me by his daughter, Miss Mary E. B. Howitt.

Young Howitt was now not merely an accomplished bushman, but had begun to turn his keen powers of observation to higher account by studying nature. At first he farmed land at Caulfield, near Melbourne, which belonged to his uncle, Dr. Godfrey Howitt. But the humdrum life of a farmer was not to his taste, and he betook himself to the more adventurous pursuit of cattle-driving. On one of the journeys which he made to the Murray River for the purpose of bringing down herds of cattle to Melbourne, he chanced to fall in with Lorimer Fison. They met and parted, little thinking how closely associated they were to be in after life.

This was the great era of exploration in Australia. The vast unknown regions of the continent stirred the imagination and raised the hopes of the colonists. Explorer after explorer set out and vanished into the far interior, some of them to return no more. Young Howitt bore his share in these arduous enterprises. It chanced that the explorer Warburton had visited the dreary region of Central Australia about Lake Eyre in an unusually fine season, when water and grass abounded, and accordingly he reported on it in glowing terms. His discoveries excited great interest in Victoria : a committee was formed in Melbourne to open up the country ; and in September 1859 Mr. Howitt, now well known as an able, careful, and fearless bushman, was sent from Adelaide at the head of a small party to spy out what, seen at a distance, appeared to the longing eyes of Australian shepherds and herdsmen a land flowing, or rather about to flow, with milk and honey. The result of Howitt's expedition was to dispel this pastoral dream. He looked for a Paradise, and found a desert. Coming from the

forest-clad and snow-capped mountains of Victoria, with their abundant rains and luxuriant vegetation, he found himself in another world. In the distance barren ranges of naked brown rocks and precipices loomed weirdly through the desert haze; and a nearer approach revealed the profound ravines by which these desolate mountains were cleft from side to side. At their feet stretched either wastes of sand, across which wind-driven columns of dust stalked like the jinn of *The Arabian Nights*, or plains so stony that riding at night the explorers could follow their leader by the sparks of fire which his horse's hoofs struck out of the stones at every step in the darkness. By day the atmosphere was at times so clear that the travellers could hardly tell whether objects seen through it were near or far; at other times the mirage worked such fantastic effects on the landscape that they felt as if transported to an enchanted land. "It was an interesting experience in a wonderful country," says Dr. Howitt dryly, in conclusion, "but it was not the kind of country that was wanted." [1]

After his return from this exploring expedition, Mr. Howitt took a post as manager of the Mount Napier cattle station, near Hamilton. But in 1860 he was again despatched by the Victorian Government on the task of exploration. This time he went with a party of picked miners to prospect for gold in the rugged, mountainous, trackless, and then almost unknown region of Gippsland, in South-eastern Victoria, where in winter the snow lies for months on the peaks and tablelands, and where in the dense jungle of the valleys the trees grow to heights scarcely

[1] *Report of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science*, Adelaide, 1907, *Inaugural Address by A. W. Howitt, C.M.G., D.Sc., F.G.S., President*, pp. 9-11 (separate reprint).

equalled on earth. The mission was successful; gold-fields were opened on the Crooked, Dargo, and Wentworth Rivers. It was during this expedition that Mr. Howitt first became keenly interested in the eucalyptus trees, to which in after life he paid much attention, acquiring an intimate knowledge of the subject both from the practical and the scientific point of view.

In the year 1860 an ill-fated expedition, equipped at lavish cost and led by Burke and Wills, had started from Melbourne amid the enthusiasm of the citizens to traverse Australia from south to north. When month after month passed and no word came of the explorers, great uneasiness was felt in Victoria, and on June eighteenth, 1861, it was decided to send out a search party to their relief. Of this party Mr. Howitt was appointed leader. He started on July fourteenth, and journeyed north to Menindie on the Darling River, then the last outpost of civilization, if indeed civilization can be said to be represented by a public-house, a shop, a lock-up, and a knot of bearded men in cabbage-tree hats, who, so far as they did not pass their leisure hours in the contemplative seclusion of the lock-up, devoted them to smoking and lounging in the public-house, discussing the latest "brush with the niggers", and criticizing the stores offered for the use of explorers, particularly the dried beef, which they smelt and tasted with the air of connoisseurs. Leaving these representatives of the higher culture behind, Mr. Howitt and his small party, with their horses and camels, struck westward into the desert. He has described his experiences briefly but graphically.[1] He tells us how, when they came to a river or a creek, the

[1] In his *Inaugural Address* to the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, Adelaide, 1907, pp. 20 *et seq.* (separate reprint).

camels stubbornly refused to take to the water, but were circumvented by human intelligence ; for, having persuaded them to sit down on the bank and then to get up again, Mr. Howitt and his companions suddenly precipitated themselves upon the brutes in an unguarded moment when they were off their balance in the act of rising, and so toppled them bodily into the stream, and hauled them across. After floundering through the water, the camels waded in the deep mud on the other side, drawing their hoofs out of it one after the other with a loud plop like the sound of drawing a gigantic cork out of a Brobdingnagian bottle. Day after day, over ground paved with sharp splinters of flinty stone, through deep dry gorges in the desolate hills, lined with half-dead mulga scrub and studded with great boulders, the explorers and their beasts slowly picked their way, footsore and weary under the burning sun, till coming out on the edge of a bluff they suddenly beheld the great sandy desert of the Cooper's Creek country spread out below and beyond them. Far as the eye could see the sandhills stretched away, ridge beyond ridge, to the horizon, until their outlines were lost in the haze of distance. As he gazed on this dreary landscape from the height, a very different scene, which he had beheld a year before in the Gippsland highlands, rose up before the mind of the explorer. Then, as he ascended a mountain summit on the Dargo River, a wonderful far-reaching prospect had burst upon him. For many miles the snowy plains stretched northwards to where, on the horizon, the chain of the Bogong Mountains rose, lustrous in their white mantle of snow, resplendently pure under the cloudless deep blue of the winter sky in the Australian Alps.

Descending from these heights, Mr. Howitt and his men pursued their way, now with labour and difficulty over the most stony wilderness imaginable, now with comparative ease over sandhills or earthy plains, cracked and fissured for want of water in all directions, sometimes bare and brown, sometimes cumbered with the dry stalks of withered plants, which rose higher than a horse and showed how, after heavy rains, the face of these arid deserts would change as by magic into a teeming jungle of vegetation. Thus they journeyed till one day, riding alone, Mr. Howitt perceived some native huts on the farther side of a dry waddy, and in the foreground a black man and woman gathering sticks. The woman at once made off towards the huts, but the man stood his ground and gesticulated in great excitement to Mr. Howitt, until on the approach of the traveller he also took to his heels. To regain his party Mr. Howitt rode along the bank of the waddy, and met his native riders, one of whom shouted to him: "Find em whitefella; two fella dead boy and one fella livo." Hastening to the native camp, Mr. Howitt found the last survivor of the missing explorers, John King, sitting in one of the huts. He was a melancholy object, hardly to be distinguished as a civilized man by the tatters that still hung on his weak, emaciated frame. At first he was too much overcome by emotion to speak distinctly; but in time he recovered sufficiently to tell his tale of suffering and disaster. It was the twenty-fifth of September when the rescuers and the rescued turned their faces homeward; on November twenty-eighth, 1861, they all reached Melbourne in safety.

A few days later the intrepid and indefatigable explorer started again for the deserts of the far interior

to explore the region of Cooper's Creek and to bring back the bones of the men who had fallen martyrs to science, that they might be buried with public honours in the city. This task also Mr. Howitt accomplished successfully. He brought back the remains of Burke and Wills to Melbourne on December twenty-eighth, 1862. For these services Mr. Howitt was appointed Police Magistrate and Warden of the Goldfields in Gippsland, a post which he filled with conspicuous success during twenty-six years of incessant work from 1863 to 1889.

It was during the expedition of 1862, when he was no longer under the necessity of pushing on from day to day lest he should come too late to rescue the survivors, that Mr. Howitt found leisure to study the natives with whom he came into contact; and it was then that he gained his first insight into the social organization of the Dieri tribe, who roamed the wilderness of Cooper's Creek and Lake Eyre. With the help of a native interpreter of the Narrinyeri tribe Mr. Howitt before long was able to make himself understood sufficiently for ordinary purposes. On this expedition also he saw for himself the wonderful transformation which after heavy rain converts the Central Australian desert into a jungle. Where an earlier explorer had beheld nothing but a dark brown wilderness without a blade of grass, Mr. Howitt rode for many days through a land of lakes, lagoons, and water-channels, with wide stretches of plains covered by a rank growth of tall plants, higher than a man on horseback, looking like vast beds of white hollyhocks in full bloom, and his horses revelled in the luxuriant herbage. So sharp was the line of demarcation between the dry and the watered land that on a steep

bank, at the point to which the flood had risen, the traveller stood with the hind feet of his horse in the desert and his front feet on the teeming vegetation.

The district of Gippsland which was committed to Mr. Howitt's care extended from Wilson's Promontory to Cape Howe. It was then a wild, almost unexplored country, and every year Mr. Howitt travelled thousands of miles through it on horseback; and as he rode among the mountains and through the great forests he learned to study minutely both the rocks and the trees. His capacity for work was extraordinary; much of his reading was done in the saddle. The botanical and geological observations which he made on these journeys bore fruit in a series of memoirs which he contributed to the publications of his official Department, the Royal Society of Victoria, the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, and occasionally to the *Quarterly Journal of Geological Science*. Among these memoirs may be particularly mentioned his treatise, "The Eucalypti of Gippsland", which appeared in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Victoria* for 1889.

Still more important for his life-work was the acquaintance which on these journeys he made with the native inhabitants, the Kurnai of Gippsland. He gained their confidence, and, being regarded by them as a fully initiated member of the tribe, was able to acquire an intimate knowledge of their old customs and beliefs before they had wholly passed into oblivion; for, though the Kurnai had long been at peace with the whites, they were even then fast dying out. Thus, when on his return from Fiji in 1871 Mr. Fison appealed through the newspapers for information on the Australian aborigines, Mr. Howitt was well qualified

by his knowledge both of the Central and of the South-eastern tribes, the Dieri as well as the Kurnai, to respond to the appeal. He did so, and, as we have seen, the two men became fast friends and colleagues in the work of investigation, laying together the foundations of Australian ethnology. In these researches the observation and collection of facts fell mainly to the share of Mr. Howitt, his colleague's professional duties and situation leaving him fewer opportunities of personal contact with the natives. On the other hand, the theoretical interpretation of the facts was at first largely the work of Mr. Fison, though in later years Mr. Howitt distinguished himself certainly not less in this department of anthropology. After the two friends had published in *Kamilaroi and Kurnai* the joint results of their inquiries and reflections, Mr. Howitt pursued his investigations for the most part alone ; indeed, even before the publication of that book, Mr. Fison had returned to Fiji. Some of the results of these investigations were given to the world in a long series of valuable memoirs on the Australian tribes, which appeared for the most part in *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* from the year 1883 to the year 1907. They opened with a joint paper by Messrs. Fison and Howitt, called " From Mother-Right to Father-Right ", and they closed with one by Dr. Howitt on " Australian Group-Relationships ". In this series an early one, entitled " Notes on the Australian Class Systems ", read in the author's absence before the Anthropological Institute in London on December twelfth, 1882,[1] is second to none in

[1] *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute, etc.* vol. xii. (1883) pp. 496-510.

importance for its clear enunciation of the principles underlying the seemingly complex marriage system of the Australian aborigines.

Strangely enough, when many years later he came to write his great work *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, Dr. Howitt had forgotten his own enunciation of these important principles; for it was only after a conversation with me at my house in Cambridge, in the summer of 1904, that he inserted a statement of them in his book, which was then going through the press. With characteristic candour he accepted the principles as true and assigned the discovery of them to me.[1] It was not till January second, 1908, that I detected our joint mistake; for on that day, reading again Dr. Howitt's old paper, "Notes on the Australian Class Systems", I found that in it he had clearly and concisely stated the principles in question many years before I had even given a thought to the subject. As I had certainly studied and cited that paper[2] long before, I make no doubt that I had learned the principles from it, though like the author of the paper I had forgotten the source of my information. I at once wrote to Dr. Howitt to do him the justice which he had failed to do himself.[3] Though I did not know it, there was no time to be lost, for when I was writing he had already been struck down by mortal sickness. Happily my letter reached him in life, and he sent me through his daughter a last message, a kind and generous message, in reply.

[1] *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, pp. 284-286.

[2] In my *Totemism*, published in 1887.

[3] At the same time I wrote to the same effect a letter to *Man*, and my letter was published in that journal, February 1908, pp. 21 *sq*. I believe I wrote at the same time an identical letter to *The Athenæum*, but on a cursory search through a file of that periodical I have not been able to find the letter.

Another paper which deserves to be specially mentioned is a later one, entitled " Further Notes on the Australian Class Systems ",[1] in which Mr. Howitt acutely pointed out how among the Australian savages a certain social advance has been made in the better watered and more fertile districts, particularly on the coast, while the more archaic forms of society linger in the dry and desert interior, from which he inferred that in Australia the first steps towards civilization have been conditioned by a heavier rainfall and a consequent greater abundance of food. This important principle was afterwards fully recognized and clearly stated by him in *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia*. Indeed he justly attached so much weight to it that he wished to illustrate it in his book by a map of the rainfall in Australia, which would show how in that continent progress in culture varies directly with the rainfall. For that purpose he applied to the meteorological authorities in London, but for lack of the necessary data, if I remember aright, the project was abandoned. Amongst his anthropological papers published elsewhere may be mentioned his paper, " Australian Group-Relationships ", published in the *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution* for 1883 ; another " On the Organisation of Australian Tribes ", in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Victoria* for 1889 ; and some papers published in *Folk-Lore* for the years 1906 and 1907.

In 1889 Mr. Howitt became Secretary for Mines in Victoria, and in 1896 he was appointed Audit Commissioner. Besides these public duties he sat on other Government commissions and boards of inquiry,

[1] *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute, etc.* vol. xviii. (1889) pp. 31-70.

for which his wide experience, ripe knowledge, and sound judgement pre-eminently fitted him. Yet we cannot but regret that he devoted so much time and energy to business, which others perhaps might have performed as efficiently, to the neglect of scientific researches, for which few were so well qualified as he. However, he continued to give his leisure hours to study, and looked forward to the time when he should be able to dedicate the rest of his life, without distraction, to his favourite pursuits. The longed-for time came, or seemed to come, at last when he retired from the public service of Victoria in 1901. His retirement was unnoticed by the public and his official colleagues, who perhaps were hardly aware of the honour they had enjoyed in being associated with such a man. He now settled down to the quiet life of a student in his picturesque home at Metung, on the shore of the Gippsland Lakes. Gippsland is a pleasant and a beautiful country, with a climate in the lowlands like that of Italy. The orange grows well there : the mountains are high and snow-capped for months together : the rivers wind through deep glens thickly mantled in living green : the gum-trees in the forest are the tallest trees in the world ; and the great tree-ferns give to the woods an aspect of tropical luxuriance. It is Australia Felix, the Happy Land of the South. But Mr. Howitt's seclusion in this earthly Paradise was not to be undisturbed. The old serpent, in the guise of public business, stole into his Eden. He was invited and consented to act as chairman of a Royal Commission on the coalfields of Victoria, and soon after he had discharged this function he was appointed a member of the Commission to which was entrusted the onerous and difficult task of choosing a

site for the future federal capital of Australia. These duties involved much travelling, as well as much critical weighing of evidence, but in spite of all distractions he made steady progress with the revision and completion of his lifelong researches in Australian ethnology. By the summer of 1904 the work was so far advanced that he came to England with his daughter, Miss Mary E. B. Howitt, to see his book through the press. It was then that I had the privilege of making his personal acquaintance. I hastened to greet him in London soon after his arrival, and learned to esteem as a man one whom I had long respected as an anthropologist. Later in the summer, in the month of August, he and his daughter did me the honour of staying for some days in my house at Cambridge to attend the meeting of the British Association. He read a paper "On Group Marriage in Australian Tribes" at the meeting, and the University of Cambridge showed its high appreciation of his services to science by conferring the honorary degree of Doctor of Science upon him. I shall always cherish the memory of his visit and of the conversations we had on the topics in which we both took a deep interest. Later in the autumn he left England for Australia, spending some time happily in Italy by the way, and there meeting once more a sister whom he had not seen for more than fifty years. Before the end of the same year (1904) the book by which he will always be chiefly remembered was published under the title of *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia*. The value and importance of the work are too well known to call for any detailed appreciation or eulogium. It must always remain an anthropological classic and the standard authority on the subject with which it deals.

Much as he had enjoyed his travels in Europe and his visit, after so many years, to the scenes of his youth, he was glad to return to his Australian home; and he now threw himself with the energy and enthusiasm of youth into his botanical and petrological studies, which the composition of his great book on the Australian natives had compelled him for a time to intermit. He cherished the hope of writing a comprehensive work on the eucalyptus trees of Victoria, and another on the rocks of Gippsland, which no man knew so well as he. But these hopes were not destined to be fulfilled. During the last years of his life he was much concerned by certain misapprehensions and misrepresentations, as he conceived them to be, of facts relating to the Australian aborigines to which currency had been given both in Australia and Europe, and he took great pains to correct these misapprehensions and to give wide publicity to his corrections. These things absorbed some of his time, and in 1907 he was called on to preside over the meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science at Adelaide. In his Presidential Address he dealt with his reminiscences of exploration in Central Australia, particularly his expeditions to rescue the lost explorers and to bring back their remains. In previous years he had presided over the Ethnological and Geographical Sections of the Association, and had been awarded the first Mueller medal for his many distinguished contributions to Australian science. In the previous year (1906) a Companionship of the Order of St. Michael and St. George (C.M.G.) had been conferred upon him in recognition of his services to the State as well as to learning.

So, full of years and honours, he returned to his

home at Metung in January 1907. The even tenour of his studious life was pleasantly diversified by one or two visits to Melbourne and by an expedition into the mountains of the Omeo district to complete his observations on the rocks. The seventy-eight years of his long life sat very lightly on him; indeed so youthful was he in mind, so keen in intellect, so exuberant in energy, that his friends anticipated with confidence for him yet many years of useful activity. But it was not to be. On the last day of the year 1907, only two days after the death of his old friend Mr. Fison, he was suddenly struck down by haemorrhage of the stomach. At first the doctors held out every hope of a complete recovery, but they soon saw that the case was beyond their power and that Dr. Howitt's days were numbered. In order that he might be nearer to medical aid, they moved him from his own house at Metung to his son's house at Bairnsdale. For seventy years of an active and adventurous life Dr. Howitt had never been confined to his bed for a single day; but, when the last sickness came, no one could have been more patient and uncomplaining, and he received with steadfast courage the announcement of the doctors that they could do nothing for him. The remaining weeks of his life were passed almost constantly in the sleep of weakness and exhaustion, but with very little acute pain. His thoughts to the last were occupied with his work: his last conscious effort was to dictate from his death-bed a message to anthropologists impressing on them the importance of caution in accepting information drawn from the Australian tribes in their present state of decay. The message, after a delay caused by miscarriage in the post, was published in the *Revue des Etudes Ethno-*

graphiques et Sociologiques for December 1908. On March the seventh, 1908, Dr. Howitt passed away. His beloved wife, to whose memory he dedicated his great book, had died six years before him. She was a daughter of Judge Boothby of Adelaide, and left him with two sons and three daughters, one of whom, Miss Mary E. B. Howitt, was his faithful helper in his anthropological labours, and nursed him to the end.

In personal appearance, and to some extent also in manner, no two men could well differ more widely than the fast friends, Fison and Howitt. Fison was a big burly man, powerfully and heavily built, with a jolly good-humoured face, a bluff almost jovial manner, tender-hearted but bubbling over with humour, on which the remembrance of his clerical profession, as well as his deep, absolutely unaffected piety, perhaps imposed a certain restraint. Howitt was a small man, with a spare but well-knit frame, light, active, and inured to exposure and fatigue. His features were keen and finely cut, with deep-set eyes and a penetrating look. It was a hawk's face; and his brisk alert manner and quick movements added to the resemblance. I remember that, when he stayed in my house at Cambridge, he used not to walk but to run upstairs like a boy, though he was then in his seventy-fifth year. When the two old men met for the last time, "Howitt," said Fison, "do you never feel the infirmities of old age?" "What are they?" he answered. While habitually graver than his friend, Howitt was by no means devoid of dry humour, and could tell old stories of the bush with admirable point and zest. On the subject which perhaps occupied their thoughts more than any other, the social organization of the Australian tribes, the two men were in

fundamental agreement. On questions much deeper and more perplexing their views differed widely, but the difference never affected their friendship, as indeed such differences need never affect the friendship of honest men alike animated, as these two unquestionably were, by a single-hearted disinterested devotion to truth. They loved each other like brothers in life, and they were not long divided in death. Such were Fison and Howitt as I knew them in their writings and in the flesh. I am proud to have known two such men, and to have numbered them among my friends.

In the history of the science of man the names of Fison and Howitt will be inseparably associated. It will be for others in future, better informed and perhaps more impartial than I am, to pronounce a final judgement on the value of their work as a whole. Here I will single out only what appears to me to be their most important contribution to knowledge —that is, the light which they have thrown on the systems of marriage and relationship prevalent among the Australian aborigines. These systems are of extraordinary interest not merely in themselves, but in their bearing on the history of marriage in general. For the systems agree fundamentally with those practised by races in many other parts of the world; and, though they present peculiarities which have not been discovered elsewhere, these peculiarities themselves appear to be only special developments of the general principles which underlie all the systems in question. Perhaps the most striking feature of the Australian systems is their apparent complexity combined with a logical, almost mathematical precision and regularity. Inquirers have long been divided on the question whether this feature is the result of accident

or design; whether the Australian aborigines have stumbled on their systems by chance, or have gradually evolved them by conscious reflection and deliberate effort. Most of those who know these savages only by reading about them in books appear to be of opinion that their social systems, for all their appearance of complexity combined with exactness and regularity, are the result of accident, that they grew up through a fortuitous train of circumstances without any prevision or purpose on the part of those who practise them. On the other hand, most of those who are best acquainted with the Australian aborigines, not through books but through personal intercourse, appear to be of opinion that their social systems are the fruit of design, and that they were deliberately devised to ensure the results which they unquestionably achieve. The latter was the opinion of Fison and Howitt, and it is the opinion of their distinguished friends and disciples, Spencer and Gillen.

In the broadest outline, omitting details and minor differences, an aboriginal Australian tribe is divided into two, four, or eight exogamous classes; that is, it consists of two, four, or eight divisions with a rule that no man may marry a woman of his own division, but may only take a wife from a single one of the other divisions. Thus, if the tribe is divided into two exogamous classes, a man is forbidden to choose his wife from among, roughly speaking, one-half of all the women of the tribe; if the tribe is divided into four exogamous classes, then three-fourths of the women are forbidden to him; and if the tribe is divided into eight exogamous classes, then no less than seven-eighths of the women of the tribe are forbidden to him. So strictly are these rules enforced that in the old days

breaches of them were commonly punished by putting both the culprits to death.

With regard to descent, when a tribe is divided into two exogamous classes, the children are always born into the class either of their father or of their mother, the custom in this respect varying in different tribes; for in some tribes the children always belong to their father's class, and in others they always belong to their mother's. When a tribe is divided into four or eight exogamous classes, the children are born into the class neither of their father nor of their mother, but always into another class, which is, however, determined for them without variation by the particular classes to which their parents belong.

It will hardly be denied that these systems, particularly the rule of the four-class or eight-class organization, that children can never belong to the class either of their father or of their mother, have at least a superficial appearance of being artificial; and the inference that they must have been deliberately devised, not created by a series of accidents, in other words, that they are a product of reason, not of chance, is confirmed by a closer examination. For it can easily be shown that the effect of dividing a tribe into two exogamous classes is to prevent the marriage of brothers with sisters; that the effect of dividing a tribe into four exogamous classes, with the characteristic rule of descent, is to prevent the marriage of parents with children;[1] and that the effect of dividing a tribe into eight exogamous classes, with the charac-

[1] That the division into two and four exogamous classes, with the peculiar rule of descent in the four-class system, not only produced these effects but was intended to produce them, was clearly stated by Dr. Howitt in his paper, "Notes on the Australian Class Systems", *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute, etc.* vol. xii. (1883) pp. 496 *sqq.* See above, pp. 315 *sq.*

teristic rule of descent, is to prevent a man's children from marrying his sister's children—that is, its effect is to prevent the marriage of some, though not all, of those whom we call first cousins. As all the marriages which these rules actually bar are abhorred by the Australian aborigines who observe the rules, it is natural to infer that the effect which the rules produce is the effect which they were designed to produce; in other words, that the rules, which have certainly the appearance of being artificial, are really so, having been devised to accomplish the very object which in point of fact they do very successfully achieve. If this inference is sound, the deliberate institution of the Australian marriage system may be taken as proved.

The objections raised to this view by those who know the Australian natives only or mainly through books resolve themselves, roughly speaking, into two. First, they deny that the Australian savages are capable of thinking out a marriage system at once so complex and so regular. But this objection is outweighed by the testimony of those who best know the Australian aborigines personally, such as Dr. Howitt and Messrs. Spencer and Gillen,[1] in whose opinion the natives are quite capable both of conceiving and of executing the system in question. That the natives understand their complex system perfectly, and work it smoothly and regularly, is certain. Why, then, should they not have originated it? Would they be

[1] A. W. Howitt, "Notes on the Australian Class Systems", *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute, etc.* vol. xii. (1883) pp. 496 *sqq.*; *id.*, *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, pp. 89 *sq.*, 140, 143; Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 12-15, 69; *id.*, *Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 123 *sq.*; *id.*, "Some Remarks on Totemism as applied to Australian Tribes", *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute, etc.* vol. xxviii. (1899) p. 278; (Sir) Baldwin Spencer, "Totemism in Australia", in *Transactions of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science*, Dunedin, 1904, pp. 419 *sq.*

more likely to understand and work it, as they do, without any serious hitch, if they had drifted into it by accident than if they had thought it out for themselves?

The other objection often brought against the theory of the deliberate institution of the Australian marriage system is that, if the system was designed to prevent the marriage of brothers with sisters, of parents with children, and of a man's children with his sister's children, it greatly overshoots the mark by simultaneously barring the marriage of many other persons who stand in none of these relationships to each other. This objection implies a total misconception of the Australian system of relationships. For, according to the classificatory system of relationship, which is universally prevalent among the Australian aborigines, the terms father, mother, brother, sister, son, and daughter are employed in a far wider signification than with us, so as to include many persons who are no blood relations at all to the speaker. The system sorts out the whole community into classes or groups, which are variously designated by these terms: the relationship which it recognizes between members of a class or group is social, not consanguineous; and though each class or group includes the blood relations whom we designate by the corresponding terms, it includes many more, and for social purposes a man does not distinguish between the members of a group who are related to him by blood and those members of the group who are not so related to him. Each man has thus many "fathers" who never begat him, and many "mothers" who never bore him: he calls many men and women his "brothers" and "sisters" with whom he has not a drop of blood in common; and he bestows the names

of "sons" and "daughters" on many boys and girls, many men and women, who are not his offspring.

Now, if we assume, as we have every right to do, that the founders of exogamy in Australia recognized the classificatory system of relationship, and the classificatory system of relationship only, we shall at once perceive that what they intended to prevent was not merely the marriage of a man with his sister, his mother, or his daughter in the physical sense in which we use these terms; their aim was to prevent his marriage with his sister, his mother, and his daughter in the classificatory sense of these terms; that is, they intended to place bars to marriage not between individuals merely but between the whole groups of persons who designated their group not their individual relationships, their social not their consanguineous ties, by the names of father and mother, brother and sister, son and daughter. And in this intention the founders of exogamy succeeded perfectly. In the completest form of the system, namely, the division of the community into eight exogamous classes, they barred the marriage of group brothers with group sisters, of group fathers with group daughters, of group mothers with group sons, and of the sons of group brothers with the daughters of group sisters. Thus the dichotomy of an Australian tribe in its completest form, namely, in the eight-class organization, was not a clumsy expedient which overshot its mark by separating from each other many persons whom the authors of it had no intention of separating: it was a device admirably adapted to effect just what its inventors intended, neither more nor less.

But while there are strong grounds for thinking that the system of exogamy has been deliberately

devised and instituted by the Australian aborigines for the purpose of effecting just what it does effect, it would doubtless be a mistake to suppose that its most complex form, the eight-class system, was struck out at a single blow. All the evidence and probability are in favour of the view that the system originated in a simple bisection of the community into two exogamous classes only ; that, when this was found insufficient to bar marriages which the natives regarded as objectionable, each of the two classes was again subdivided into two, making four exogamous classes in all ; and finally that, when four exogamous classes still proved inadequate for the purpose, each of them was again subdivided into two, making eight exogamous classes in all. Thus from a simple beginning the Australian aborigines appear to have advanced step by step to the complex system of eight exogamous classes, the process being one of successive bisections or dichotomies. The first bisection barred the marriage of brothers with sisters : the second bisection, combined with the characteristic rule of descent, which places the children in a different class both from the father and from the mother, barred the marriage of parents with children ; and the third bisection, combined with a rule of descent like the preceding, barred the marriage of a man's children with his sister's children ; in other words, it prevented the marriage of some, but not all, of those whom we call first cousins.[1]

But, if the system was devised to prevent the marriage of brothers with sisters, of parents with children, and of a man's children with his sister's

[1] These two last paragraphs I have allowed myself to quote from my book, *Totemism and Exogamy* (vol. i pp. 282 *sq.*, 288), to which I would refer my readers for a fuller explanation and discussion of a somewhat intricate subject.

children, it seems to follow that such marriages were common before the system was instituted to check them; in short, it implies that exogamy was a deliberate prohibition of a former unrestricted practice of incest, which allowed the nearest relations to mate with each other. This implication is confirmed, as Messrs. Howitt, Spencer, and Gillen have shown for the tribes of Central Australia, by customs which can be reasonably interpreted only as a system of group marriage or as survivals of a still wider practice of sexual communism. And, as the custom of exogamy combined with the classificatory system of relationship is not confined to Australia, but is found among many races in many parts of the world, it becomes probable that a large part, if not the whole, of the human race have at one time, not necessarily the earliest, in their history permitted the practice of incest, that is, of the closest interbreeding, and that, having perceived or imagined the practice to be injurious, they deliberately forbade and took effective measures to prevent it.

That is the great generalization reached by Lewis H. Morgan from his discovery of the classificatory system of relationship. It is perhaps the most remarkable achievement of Fison and Howitt first, and of their disciples Spencer and Gillen afterwards, that their researches among the Australian tribes have not only lent powerful support to the conclusions of the American ethnologist, but have given us an insight into the machinery by which the great social reform was effected. The machinery was, indeed, simple: it consisted merely in the bisection, whether single or repeated, of the whole community into two exogamous classes. In Australia the application of this machinery to effect this purpose is seen more clearly than in any

other part of the world, because in many Australian tribes the bisection has been repeated oftener than anywhere else, or, rather, oftener than it is known to have been repeated elsewhere; for it is possible that among other races of men similar secondary and tertiary subdivisions have occurred, though they seem now to have vanished without leaving a trace. The oldest social stratification, so to say, of mankind is better preserved among the Australian aborigines than among any other people of whom we have knowledge. To have obtained an accurate record of that stratification before it finally disappeared, as it must very soon do, is an achievement of the highest importance for the understanding of human history; and we owe the possession of that record, now safely deposited in the archives of science, mainly to the exertions and the influence of Fison and Howitt.

IV

ALBERT HOUTIN[1]

French literature and the history of French religious thought in our time have suffered a heavy loss through the death of Albert Houtin, who passed away after a long illness at his quiet home in Paris last week.

Of a deeply religious temperament, he entered as a novice a Benedictine monastery, and found there for a time the paradise of his dreams. But soon the internal dissensions by which he discovered the Order to be torn brought disillusionment, and reluctantly he resigned his cherished ideal of a monastic life. But for long his religious faith remained unshaken; he was ordained a priest, and for years ministered at the altar. Always a student, his bent to reading and reflection led to his appointment as professor in a Catholic seminary, and it was in the course of the historical studies which the duties of his office imposed on him that he gradually and sorrowfully recognized the rents and fissures in the foundations of that marvellous structure, the Catholic Church, which presents to the outward eye an appearance so vast, so venerable, so imposing. In the long struggle between faith and reason victory finally remained with the intellect: the impulse of sentiment yielded to the evidence of history; and step by step the shepherd was himself

[1] Letter published in the *Times*, August 4, 1926.

driven from the fold into which he had sought to guide the lost sheep and to carry the strayed lambs of the Christian flock.

Of this prolonged conflict all Houtin's works are a precious, perhaps an imperishable, record. Though his clear, logical, and characteristically French intelligence compelled him to abandon the traditional dogmas of Catholicism, and indeed of Christianity, to the end of his life all his preoccupations, all his interests, were religious; his thought dwelt perpetually on those eternal mysteries of the world and of man of which in his youth he fondly imagined that he had found the true, the eternal solution. He did not marry: he hardly mixed with the world: he shunned notoriety as steadily as many men seek it: to the last he remained at heart a Benedictine. But his works will survive him; they are a treasure-house of religious psychology and a permanent record of the currents of thought which, in this and the last generation, have been surely, if silently, drifting the ship of faith farther and farther away from its old moorings in Christianity.

In this country Houtin's writings are almost unknown, though one of them, perhaps the least valuable of all, *A Short History of Christianity*, has lately been translated into English. It is much to be desired that they should reach a wider circle of readers in English-speaking lands. Among them, if translations are to be made into our language, it might be well to begin with the two early volumes which deal with Biblical questions in France in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; or perhaps the most fitting introduction to them might be the author's last work—the story of his own life as a priest, which he tells with perfect

simplicity and transparent sincerity as a document of religious biography. The book has much more than a purely personal interest. It is doubtless typical of the sad experience of many who lack either the skill or the courage to confess their disillusionment to the world. To the few who were privileged to enjoy the writer's friendship the book will always bring back the memory of a stainless life and of a sweet and gentle disposition marred by no touch of weakness. " Of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

V

ALLOCUTIONS

I

SUR L'ÉTUDE DES ORIGINES HUMAINES[1]

Monsieur le Recteur, Messieurs les Professeurs, Mesdames et Messieurs—Ce n'est pas sans émotion que je me trouve dans cette place et que je regarde cet auditoire qui m'écoute. Dans ma jeunesse, comme tous les jeunes gens, j'avais mes rêves, mais jamais de ma vie je n'ai osé rêver d'être docteur de la Sorbonne. Vous me pardonnerez, donc, Mesdames et Messieurs, si je me sens encore, pour ainsi dire, ébloui par la hauteur à laquelle l'Université de Paris m'a élevé, et si je vous parle en balbutiant, comme si je craignais à tout instant de me réveiller en sursaut et de trouver évanouis et la salle et l'auditoire, et de m'apercevoir que la cérémonie solennelle dans le grand amphithéâtre n'a été qu'un beau rêve.

Qu'on songe à la grande, l'immense foule de docteurs qui, depuis le moyen âge, ont fait retentir de leur voix les salles de la Sorbonne !

Quelle diversité de doctrines ils ont enseignée ! Quelle variété de préceptes ils ont inculquée à leurs élèves ! Que de discours subtils, que de déclamations

[1] This allocution was pronounced at the Sorbonne, Paris, December 5, 1921, a few days after an honorary doctorate had been conferred on the speaker by the University of Paris. To obviate possible misconceptions, I mention that this discourse was written as well as spoken by me in French; it was not written in English and translated into French. It was published in *La Renaissance*, 17 Décembre 1921.

passionnées sur des thèses qui, aux orateurs, semblaient être vérités des plus certaines et des plus importantes, mais qui, à nous autres de cette génération, paraissent soit banales, soit fausses et même absurdes ! Et nous qui leur avons succédé et qui occupons leurs sièges pendant quelques heures si brèves, nous nous flattons d'avoir atteint quelques vérités qui ont échappé à nos prédécesseurs, et nous prêchons ces soi-disant vérités avec la même bonne foi, avec la même conviction et la même ardeur qu'eux. Hélas ! Messieurs, ne nous trompons pas là-dessus. Ce qui à nous, hommes de la présente génération, paraît être la vraie vérité ne l'est pas, pas plus que celle qui aux yeux de nos devanciers offrait la même apparence trompeuse. Par une nécessité fatale l'homme poursuit toujours la vérité, mais jamais il ne l'atteint. Dans cette poursuite ce qu'il attrape, ce qu'il saisit, n'est qu'une ombre, un fantôme, une image ; la vraie vérité lui échappe et lui échappera à jamais. La poursuite est sans fin, le but s'éloigne à mesure que nous avançons, comme l'arc-en-ciel qui fuit devant nous et se rit de nos faibles efforts pour le saisir. Contemplant cette poursuite toujours renouvelée et toujours vaine, nous sommes tentés de nous écrier avec le sage : *Vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas !*

Néanmoins pour ma part je ne crois pas que dans cette conclusion décourageante le sage ait eu tout à fait raison. Il me semble que si nous n'atteignons jamais la vérité elle-même, chaque génération arrive à la serrer d'un peu plus près. C'est-à-dire que nous ne tournons pas toujours dans un cercle identique : l'histoire de l'humanité n'est pas un triste cycle d'illusions et de désillusions alternatives : ce n'est pas une oscillation éternelle entre la foi et le scepticisme, entre

l'espoir et le désespoir. Non, il y a un progrès lent mais perceptible, qui nous emporte d'un commencement inconnu vers un but également inconnu : l'humanité est, pour ainsi dire, accrochée aux marches d'un grand escalier qui monte depuis des abîmes sombres jusqu'aux hauteurs de plus en plus illuminées d'un jour radieux et céleste. Il ne nous est pas donné, à nous, frêles créatures éphémères, ni de sonder ces abîmes effroyables ni de jeter nos regards vers ces cimes vertigineuses : il nous suffit d'entrevoir celles des marches de ce grand escalier qui sont les plus rapprochées de nous, et de constater que le mouvement général de l'humanité va en montant l'escalier et non pas en le descendant.

C'est l'idée de ce progrès de l'humanité qui a occupé ma pensée et dirigé mes études, et c'est d'elle que je voudrais vous parler. Sans entrer dans des détails, qui seraient déplacés, j'essayerai de vous exposer brièvement quelques considérations générales qui m'ont guidé dans mes recherches.

La science à laquelle j'ai consacré une grande partie de ma vie est la science de l'homme ou l'anthropologie. Cette science prend pour son mot d'ordre le précepte de l'oracle de Delphes : " Connais-toi toi-même." Mais comment se connaître ? D'abord l'homme est un être complexe : il se compose, d'après la distinction habituelle, de corps et d'esprit. A vrai dire, cette distinction, si commode qu'elle soit, est peu exacte, puisque les deux choses, le corps et l'esprit, sont si étroitement entrelacées qu'il est assez difficile de les démêler ; ou plutôt, pour parler avec plus d'exactitude, nous ne connaissons notre corps que par nos sénsations, qui font partie de notre esprit ; de sorte qu'au fond

l'homme ne se connaît vraiment qu'en esprit. Mais pour l'usage de la vie ordinaire et même des études il est assez commode de supposer que le corps et le reste du monde qu'on appelle extérieur existent indépendamment de nos sensations. Supposant, donc, que l'homme se compose de corps et d'esprit, on peut étudier soit l'un, soit l'autre de ces éléments. Pour ma part, c'est l'esprit humain qui m'intéresse le plus et c'est à son étude que je me suis attaché.

Mais même en laissant de côté le corps humain, la question de l'esprit humain reste d'une complexité énorme. Contemplons cet esprit, non pas seulement en lui-même, mais en toutes ses manifestations extérieures, je veux dire en tout ce qu'il a créé d'arts, de sciences, d'institutions sociales, politiques, religieuses. Et souvenons-nous que pendant des siècles innombrables ces arts, ces sciences, ces institutions ont varié presque à l'infini selon les diversités des races, des temps, des lieux. Ainsi regardée l'étude de l'esprit humain devient d'une complexité effrayante. Comment l'aborder ? Comment l'esprit humain peut-il se comprendre ? Comment est-il en état d'expliquer toutes ses créations, si multiples, si variées, si diverses ?

On explique une chose en l'analysant, c'est-à-dire, en la décomposant en ses éléments simples, et en évaluant les forces qui ont rapproché et réuni ces éléments, les emboîtant les uns dans les autres de façon à en faire un ensemble cohérent et harmonieux. Donc, pour l'étude de l'esprit humain et de ses œuvres, la question se pose : comment trouver les éléments et évaluer les forces dont cet ensemble si complexe est formé ? Comment découvrir la pensée humaine dans sa plus grande simplicité ?

La réponse à cette question est fournie par la théorie

de l'évolution organique. D'après cette théorie, chaque organisme, soit animal, soit végétal, a été produit par une évolution séculaire qui remonte, sans interruption, aux premiers débuts de la vie sur notre planète, et qui consiste dans une longue série de transformations progressives, de telle sorte qu'à chaque étape l'être vivant devient un peu moins simple et un peu plus complexe. D'où il suit que pour comprendre la nature de n'importe quel organisme il faut chercher son origine dans le passé le plus reculé et suivre l'histoire de son évolution depuis ce premier moment jusqu'à nos jours. A cette règle l'homme ne fait pas exception. Pour le connaître parfaitement il faudrait étudier l'histoire de son espèce dès le commencement : il faudrait tracer son évolution à la fois corporelle et mentale depuis ses origines les plus humbles jusqu'aux hauteurs les plus fastueuses qu'il se pique d'avoir atteintes. En un mot, pour savoir ce qu'est l'homme il faut connaître son origine.

Mais on m'objectera qu'une connaissance parfaite de l'histoire de notre espèce dépasse les moyens dont nous disposons, et que si, sans une telle connaissance, la nature humaine reste incompréhensible, il faudra renoncer à l'espoir de jamais la comprendre. Hélas ! l'objection n'est que trop juste, mais elle porte non seulement sur l'étude de l'homme, mais sur l'étude de n'importe quel être, de n'importe quelle chose. Créatures imparfaites que nous sommes, la connaissance parfaite n'est pas à notre portée : il faut nous contenter de quelque chose qui s'accorde mieux avec la mesure de nos faibles facultés : il faut nous borner aux limites étroites que nous impose la nature : il faut nous guider par des lumières blafardes et incertaines dans les ténèbres de cet univers illimité où nous

sommes égarés. Consolons-nous de notre ignorance par la pensée que nos descendants arriveront à résoudre beaucoup de problèmes qui pour nous restent des énigmes. Car il faut toujours se souvenir que l'évolution organique, comme la grande évolution cosmique, ne s'arrête pas à nous autres, homuncules de cette génération : elle poursuivra son cours grandiose pendant des siècles sans fin, créant des êtres toujours plus parfaits, doués des facultés plus capables que les nôtres de saisir et de comprendre la vérité.

Mais pour nous qui vivons l'heure présente, la question reste toujours, comment acquérir une connaissance, si imparfaite qu'elle soit, de l'origine de notre espèce, et surtout de l'origine de l'esprit humain ? Car, ainsi que je l'ai déjà indiqué, il s'agit pour moi de comprendre l'évolution spirituelle plutôt que l'évolution corporelle de l'humanité. Eh bien, il me semble que pour retracer l'histoire ancienne de l'esprit humain, pour décomposer en ses éléments sa pensée déjà si complexe, il faut étudier soit le développement de l'intelligence des enfants, soit les restes de l'homme préhistorique et ses œuvres, soit les sauvages vivant de notre temps. Permettez-moi de vous dire quelques mots sur chacune de ces études.

D'abord, en ce qui concerne les enfants, il est manifeste que leur intelligence se développe avec l'âge à mesure qu'ils avancent de l'enfance jusqu'à la maturité ; et c'est une théorie assez probable que ce développement de l'intelligence dans l'individu reproduit en raccourci l'évolution de l'intelligence dans l'espèce. Car l'embryologie a démontré que le développement du corps humain depuis l'embryon jusqu'à l'adulte répète en raccourci l'évolution cor-

porelle de l'espèce humaine depuis les formes de la vie les plus élémentaires jusqu'à son plein épanouissement en l'homme. Par conséquent il n'est pas trop téméraire de supposer une répétition parallèle de l'évolution spirituelle dans l'individu. Donc, il est permis de conclure que l'étude soigneuse et exacte de l'intelligence et de la conduite des enfants peut jeter de la lumière sur maintes questions qui restent encore obscures dans l'histoire de la pensée humaine.

A l'égard de l'étude de l'homme préhistorique il serait impertinent de ma part de vous dire grand'chose ici à Paris, au foyer même de la science de la paléontologie humaine. C'est la France qui a créé cette science encore jeune : c'est de vos grands maîtres français que les savants des autres pays ont appris les principes qui les guident dans leurs recherches. Je me permets seulement d'observer que, si grands que soient les services rendus par l'archéologie préhistorique à l'histoire de la pensée humaine, elle laisse des lacunes énormes dans les annales de notre espèce. Songez aux millions et millions d'hommes qui ont vécu sur notre planète ; combien de leurs ossements sont parvenus jusqu'à nous ? Des hommes qui vivaient aux âges les plus reculés on a découvert jusqu'ici, je crois, les restes d'une douzaine ou d'une vingtaine tout au plus. Comment tirer des conclusions larges et imposantes d'une induction si étroite et si chétive ? Et quant aux œuvres des hommes préhistoriques, bien qu'elles soient beaucoup plus nombreuses que les restes de leurs squelettes, elles sont rarement à même de nous éclairer sur les questions qui nous intéressent le plus. Nous savons que les hommes préhistoriques se façonnaient des instruments de pierre, qu'ils vivaient dans les temps les plus reculés au moyen de la chasse, et

que quelques-uns d'entre eux entouraient leurs morts de soins qui semblent témoigner leur croyance en une vie d'outre-tombe. Mais à part quelques vagues généralités, la paléontologie humaine jusqu'ici nous a appris très peu de chose sur la vie et la pensée de nos ancêtres primitifs.

Donc, pour nous fournir des idées plus abondantes et plus précises sur les origines de l'esprit humain il nous reste l'étude des sauvages vivant de notre temps. On peut objecter : " Ces sauvages sont nos contemporains ; comment peuvent-ils nous éclairer sur la vie et la pensée de nos ancêtres lointains ? " A cette question, comme à tant d'autres, la réponse est donnée par la théorie de l'évolution. D'après les conclusions de cette théorie, qui semblent s'accorder parfaitement avec les faits, l'évolution organique procède à des degrés d'accélération très différents, non pas seulement dans les espèces différentes des êtres vivants, mais même dans les individus de la même espèce. Songez, par exemple, à la différence entre le cerveau d'un Laplace et d'un laboureur. Il semble certain que le cerveau, et par conséquent l'intelligence, de l'un, a beaucoup plus évolué que celle de l'autre. Et la même conclusion s'impose quand nous tournons nos regards vers les différentes races humaines et essayons de les comparer les unes aux autres. Par exemple, comparons les aborigènes de l'Australie avec des Européens : il est clair que ces sauvages restent à un niveau intellectuel et moral plus bas que celui de la généralité des Européens ; et c'est une inférence très probable que leur état arriéré est une simple conséquence d'un ralentissement relatif de l'évolution organique chez eux. Certainement cette vue est

préférable à l'ancienne théorie qui supposait que tous les sauvages ont dégénéré d'un état primitif de vertu et de sagesse parfaites. D'une telle dégénération il n'y a aucune preuve ni aucune probabilité : selon toutes les apparences, l'humanité tout entière est en train de monter et non pas descendre l'échelle de la vie : toutes les races humaines ont fait et font encore du progrès vers un état social meilleur, mais ce progrès se fait à des degrés de rapidité très différents selon les races. Les sauvages avancent plus lentement que nous autres civilisés : voilà tout.

C'est justement cette lenteur des progrès parmi les sauvages qui nous permet d'entrevoir en leurs divers états sociaux quelques-unes des diverses étapes de sauvagerie et de barbarie que les ancêtres des races civilisées ont parcourues dans le passé. Car les sauvages sont loin de se trouver tous au même niveau de développement : tandis que quelques-uns restent très bas sur l'échelle de la culture, d'autres au contraire y ont monté si haut qu'ils ne sont pas très éloignés de la civilisation. Entre ces extrêmes il se trouve une foule de cas intermédiaires, qu'on peut ranger en série de façon à former un tableau de l'évolution des idées et des institutions humaines. Voilà pourquoi l'étude des sauvages vivants est d'une si haute importance pour la connaissance de l'histoire de l'esprit humain et de ses manifestations multiples.

Mais gardons-nous d'imaginer que le tableau ainsi retracé du développement de la culture humaine soit exact et complet. Il s'en faut de beaucoup. A part de nombreuses lacunes qu'on peut remarquer dans le tableau, où les étapes intermédiaires font défaut, il serait téméraire au plus haut degré de supposer que n'importe quel état d'une tribu sauvage vivante

correspond, trait pour trait, à une étape autrefois parcourue par les ancêtres des races civilisées. Supposer une telle chose ce serait se faire une idée très fausse du procédé de l'évolution : ce serait imaginer que l'évolution suit partout le même cours et qu'elle ne diffère qu'en degrés de rapidité dans les différentes races humaines. D'une telle supposition il suivrait que, laissées à elles-mêmes, toutes les races humaines arriveraient au bout du compte exactement aux mêmes étages de culture ; que les nègres, par exemple, deviendraient des blancs ; qu'ils se donneraient des lois aussi sages que celles de Justinien ou du code Napoléon ; qu'ils façonneraient des statues aussi belles que celles de Phidias ou de Michel-Ange ; qu'ils écriraient des tragédies aussi émouvantes que celles de Shakespeare, et des comédies aussi spirituelles que celles de Molière ; et qu'ils créeraient une musique aussi ravissante que celle de Mozart. Non, Messieurs, la Nature n'est pas dépourvue d'imagination au point d'être forcée de couler tous les hommes dans le même moule ; au contraire, elle crée une richesse prodigieuse de types divers, si bien qu'on peut se demander si jamais elle a produit deux individus de la même espèce absolument pareils. C'est justement cette diversité illimitée de types qui forme la condition préalable de l'évolution organique. Nous pouvons nous figurer cette force créatrice, si je peux l'appeler ainsi, comme un arbre dont les rameaux poussent de tous les côtés ; eh bien, ces rameaux se ressemblent sans être jamais tout à fait semblables les uns aux autres, et sans jamais se réunir dans un seul tronc pareil à celui dont tous sont sortis ; au contraire, plus ils se développent plus ils s'éloignent les uns des autres. La même chose arrive au grand arbre de la vie : plus il crée de nou-

velles espèces, et plus ces espèces continuent à se propager, plus elles divergent. Cependant cette loi de divergence toujours croissante ne s'applique pas si rigoureusement aux races humaines qu'aux diverses espèces d'animaux, parce que toutes les races humaines, ne formant qu'une espèce, peuvent se mêler et produire ainsi un type intermédiaire ; mais dans ce mélange, si je ne me trompe, les divers éléments persistent et peuvent reparaître dans des rejetons assez éloignés.

Quoi qu'il en soit, il est certain que les grandes lignes de l'évolution organique tendent à s'écarter de plus en plus les unes des autres. Donc, pour revenir à nos sauvages, si nous tâchons d'écrire l'histoire ancienne de l'humanité d'après les données des races sauvages vivantes, il faut toujours se souvenir que cette histoire ne peut être qu'approximativement exacte, parce que, de toutes les étapes dans lesquelles ces sauvages se trouvent aujourd'hui, aucune ne correspond exactement à une étape déjà parcourue par nos ancêtres. Sous cette réserve importante, j'ose croire que l'étude des sauvages vivants nous fournit les matériaux les plus copieux et les plus sûrs pour reconstituer jusqu'à un certain point le tableau de l'humanité préhistorique.

Je dis jusqu'à un certain point, parce que les sauvages de nos jours, ayant tous sans exception accompli un certain progrès dans les arts utiles, ne sont nullement primitifs en ce sens qu'ils représentent l'état primordial de nos ancêtres au moment où ils ont cessé d'être des bêtes et ont commencé d'être des hommes. Loin de là, le sauvage, tel qu'il est aujourd'hui, se rapproche sans doute beaucoup plus de l'homme civilisé que des singes les plus avancés, qui

sont ses parents les plus proches dans l'échelle de la vie animale. Par conséquent, l'étude des sauvages de nos jours ne peut éclaircir qu'une assez petite partie de la longue histoire du genre humain. La plus grande partie de cette histoire, qui a duré pendant des siècles innombrables, reste encore, et restera peut-être toujours, plongée dans des ténèbres épaisses et impénétrables.

Pour résumer la thèse précédente, si nous voulons comprendre l'esprit humain en son état le plus complexe et le plus développé, tel que nous le trouvons parmi les nations les plus civilisées, il faut tâcher de le décomposer en ses éléments les plus simples : or ces éléments nous les trouvons dans l'état le plus simple soit chez l'enfant, soit chez le sauvage, parce que tous deux restent à des étapes plus arriérées de l'évolution mentale de l'humanité. Voilà pourquoi l'étude des origines humaines s'impose à tous ceux qui voudraient comprendre l'esprit humain et ses créations si multiples et si diverses, surtout cette grande création, la dernière et la plus imposante de toutes, qui s'appelle la civilisation : voilà pourquoi derrière le civilisé il faut toujours chercher et l'enfant et le sauvage.

Ayant terminé ce bref exposé des considérations générales qui m'ont porté depuis longtemps vers l'étude de nos sauvages, je demanderai la permission de vous entretenir quelques minutes sur un problème d'origine dont quelques savants chez nous se sont beaucoup occupés durant ces dernières années ; je veux dire la question de l'origine unique ou multiple des idées, des arts, et des institutions. Il s'agit d'expliquer les grandes ressemblances d'idées, d'arts, et d'institutions qui se font remarquer parmi les

tribus sauvages, même les plus diverses et les plus éloignées de par le monde. On se demande si ces ressemblances viennent de ce que l'esprit humain se ressemble partout, et par conséquent qu'il produit partout des idées, des arts, des institutions semblables, comme des machines faites d'après le même modèle fabriquent des produits semblables ; ou bien si ces ressemblances proviennent de ce que les gens s'empruntent leurs idées, leurs arts, leurs institutions les uns aux autres, de sorte que si l'on pouvait tracer l'histoire de toutes ces idées, de tous ces arts, et de toutes ces institutions jusqu'à leur source, on trouverait que chacune d'elles n'a tiré son origine que d'un seul cerveau humain, d'où elle s'est répandue en des cercles toujours croissants de par le monde ? En un mot, les idées, les arts, les institutions communes à plusieurs peuples, sont-elles d'origine diverse ou unique ? Sont-elles l'œuvre de plusieurs individus ou d'un seul ?

Comme vous voyez, ce sont deux hypothèses contraires. Pour considérer d'abord l'hypothèse d'après laquelle chaque idée, chaque art, chaque institution a tiré son origine d'un seul individu, auquel tout le reste du monde l'a emprunté depuis, soit directement, soit indirectement par l'entremise des autres, il est certain qu'une grande partie des idées, des arts, des institutions humaines se sont répandues de cette façon de par la terre. Le fait est trop évident pour que j'aie besoin d'y insister longuement. Considérez, par exemple, les grandes découvertes scientifiques et les grandes inventions mécaniques de nos jours. Aussitôt qu'un esprit supérieur vient de découvrir une nouvelle loi de la nature ou d'inventer un nouveau mécanisme propre soit à améliorer la vie humaine soit à la détruire

de la façon la plus facile et la plus rapide possible, tout le monde se hâte de s'approprier cette belle découverte soit pour son propre bénéfice soit pour l'extermination radicale de ses voisins. Ainsi par voie d'emprunt la nouvelle idée ou la nouvelle invention se propage partout et bientôt a fait le tour du monde. C'est également ainsi, mais beaucoup plus lentement, que les grandes religions, comme le Bouddhisme, le Christianisme, le Mahométisme, se sont répandues sur la terre. Il n'y a eu qu'un seul Bouddha, un seul Christ, un seul Mahomet ; c'est du cerveau solitaire de chacun de ces trois grands génies que ces créations gigantesques sont nées, et c'est par la voie de communication et d'emprunt qu'elles se sont propagées à travers le monde et à travers les siècles.

Mais quelque téméraire qu'il soit de nier que les hommes empruntent leurs idées, leurs arts, et leurs institutions les uns aux autres, il serait aussi téméraire, à mon avis, de prétendre qu'un seul homme parmi tant de millions d'hommes ait été capable de trouver telle ou telle vérité, d'inventer tel ou tel mécanisme, de créer telle ou telle institution ; et que jusqu'à ce que ce génie unique ait paru sur la terre, tous les autres hommes aient dû rester sans la connaissance de cette idée, sans l'emploi de ce mécanisme, sans la pratique de cette institution. Soutenir une telle thèse serait vraiment porter contre la nature humaine une accusation d'imbécillité qu'elle n'a pas méritée. Au contraire, l'expérience semble avoir démontré que des hommes différents peuvent très bien concevoir les mêmes idées et faire les mêmes découvertes indépendamment les uns des autres, même quand il s'agit d'idées très complexes et de découvertes très difficiles. Pour ne pas recourir au cas célèbre du calcul différentiel

inventé, dit-on, simultanément par Newton et Leibnitz, tout le monde sait que votre grand astronome Leverrier et notre grand astronome Adams ont découvert presque au même moment et indépendamment l'un de l'autre la planète Neptune par des calculs mathématiques très compliqués et très subtils que tous les deux ont basés sur l'observation des perturbations de la planète Uranus. Quelques années plus tard nos deux grands biologues Darwin et Wallace ont imaginé simultanément et indépendamment l'un de l'autre la même théorie pour expliquer l'évolution organique et l'origine des espèces tant végétales qu'animales. Or cette théorie loin d'être simple et évidente, était fondée sur une longue série d'observations multiples et de considérations variées et profondes, qui avaient occupé ces deux hommes éminents pendant beaucoup d'années.

Avec de tels exemples de grandes découvertes scientifiques faites, pour ainsi dire, sous nos yeux et presque de notre temps, comment peut-on soutenir que jamais la même idée ne peut venir à l'esprit de deux hommes à la fois ? Que pour la découverte de ses arts, de ses sciences, de ses institutions, la race humaine dépend du hasard qui fait que la nature ou la fortune a doué un seul individu de facultés tout à fait exceptionnelles et hors ligne ? Pour moi, sans nourrir des idées exagérées sur la grandeur de l'esprit humain, je ne le conçois pas si obtus, si dénué d'intelligence qu'une telle théorie le présupposerait.

Donc, pour revenir à nos sauvages, je crois que, tandis que beaucoup des ressemblances qu'on trouve dans les idées, dans les arts, dans les institutions de tribus différentes s'expliquent par la théorie d'emprunt, certaines autres se sont produites indépendamment les unes des autres, grâce à la similitude de l'esprit

humain, qui partout, pour répondre aux mêmes besoins de la vie, sait trouver des inventions à peu près pareilles. Certes, à l'égard des découvertes les plus simples, personne, je crois, ne contesterait la possibilité que des hommes puissent indépendamment arriver aux mêmes conclusions. Prenez, par exemple, les propositions les plus élémentaires de l'arithmétique. Que deux et deux font quatre est une vérité, je pense, indiscutable même d'après Einstein. Eh bien, doit-on supposer que cette vérité ait été découverte une fois pour toutes par un génie mathémathique extraordinaire, une sorte de Galilée embryonnaire, et que de sa seule bouche tout le reste du monde l'ait apprise et qu'on l'ait cru sur parole ? Personne, je pense, ne soutiendrait une telle absurdité. On pourrait multiplier à l'infini de tels exemples. Que le soleil se lève en apparence chaque jour à l'est et se couche à l'ouest est une vérité qui assurément n'a pas échappé à la généralité de nos aïeux sauvages : ils n'ont pas dû attendre la naissance d'un astronome de génie pour vérifier une observation que chaque homme et même chaque enfant peut faire tous les jours pour lui-même.

Mais après qu'on a écarté les idées les plus simples et les découvertes les plus faciles, à l'égard desquelles personne n'oserait nier qu'elles ont pu venir à l'esprit de beaucoup d'hommes indépendamment les uns des autres, il reste un grand nombre d'idées plus complexes et de découvertes plus difficiles très répandues dans le monde, à propos desquelles on peut se demander sans absurdité : chacune d'elles, a-t-elle été trouvée par un seul individu ou par plusieurs ? A-t-elle eu une origine unique ou multiple ? Prenons, par exemple, la grande découverte du feu, la plus importante peut-être de toutes dans l'histoire de l'humanité, puisque plus que

toute autre chose l'usage du feu distingue l'homme de ses anciens rivaux, les fauves. On peut se demander : cette grande découverte a-t-elle été faite par un seul homme, le Prométhée primitif, qui a ensuite communiqué le bienfait à tout le reste du monde, ou bien plusieurs hommes en des lieux différents ont-ils appris indépendamment les uns des autres à utiliser et surtout à produire le feu, soit en frottant des morceaux de bois, soit en frappant des silex l'un contre l'autre ? A cette question l'état de nos connaissances ne permet pas de donner une réponse dogmatique. Mais s'il m'est permis d'exprimer une opinion sur un sujet si discutable, il me paraît vraisemblable que la découverte a été faite par plusieurs indépendamment plutôt que par un seul homme une fois pour toutes. Si l'on songe que selon toutes les probabilités l'homme a trouvé la façon de produire le feu par un simple hasard, soit en trouant du bois, soit en coupant du silex pour se faire un outil de pierre ; et si l'on songe ensuite au nombre de fois que les hommes sauvages ont troué du bois et coupé du silex, on conviendra, je crois, que ce hasard heureux a dû se reproduire mille fois, et que par conséquent la grande découverte a dû se répéter mille fois dans les temps préhistoriques. Donc, il n'est nullement nécessaire de recourir à la legende d'un Prométhée solitaire pour expliquer l'usage universel du feu parmi les hommes.

On peut dire la même chose à l'égard d'autres arts qu'on trouve répandus parmi les sauvages, tels que ceux d'apprivoiser des animaux, de travailler les métaux, de labourer la terre. Il est possible et même probable que la découverte de chacun de ces procédés utiles s'est répétée à plusieurs reprises en plusieurs parties du monde.

Si l'on nous demande : comment distinguer les découvertes faites une fois pour toutes des découvertes répétées ? il faut avouer qu'un critérium précis nous manque, puisque pour résoudre le problème nous ne disposons que de conjectures plus ou moins vraisemblables. Mais en général on peut dire que plus une découverte est simple, plus il devient probable qu'elle a été répétée plusieurs fois dans l'histoire ; tandis que plus elle est complexe, plus on est autorisé à croire qu'elle a été trouvée une fois pour toutes par un génie extraordinaire. En d'autres termes, à l'égard des découvertes faites par l'homme, la probabilité d'une origine unique pour chacune d'elles varie en proportion inverse de la complexité des idées qu'elle implique. Cependant les exemples que j'ai cités de grandes découvertes scientifiques faites par plus d'un savant à la fois doivent nous avertir de ne pas borner trop étroitement la fertilité du génie humain en supposant que, comme la plante d'aloès, il est incapable de faire pousser plus d'une fois même les plus belles fleurs de la science.

Enfin, pour citer un seul exemple des inventions que le génie humain semble incapable d'enfanter plus d'une fois, je nommerai les contes populaires que Perrault et les frères Grimm, pour ne pas parler d'autres, ont rendus si familiers et si chers à nous tous. Dans les plus célèbres de ces charmantes créations il me semble que les idées sont trop nombreuses et leur combinaison trop complexe pour nous permettre de supposer que plusieurs esprits, sans connaissance les uns des autres, ont pu les imaginer et les disposer de façon à en faire des ensembles à la fois si artificiels et si gracieux. D'ailleurs je suis prêt à suivre les meilleures autorités en croyant qu'au moins une grande

partie de ce trésor spirituel a été léguée au monde par l'Inde.

Monsieur le Recteur, Messieurs les Professeurs, Mesdames et Messieurs, j'ai trop abusé de votre patience, et il faut conclure ces observations décousues sur l'étude des origines humaines. En vous les soumettant je n'ai pas eu la prétention de rien vous apprendre de nouveau. Mon seul but a été de témoigner mes sentiments de reconnaissance profonde à l'Université de Paris qui a daigné m'accorder le grand honneur du doctorat. Comme je l'ai déjà dit au moment inoubliable pour moi de la cérémonie solennelle, j'ai accepté l'honneur non pas tant pour moi-même que pour ma patrie, que la France a honorée en ma personne. L'individu est peu de chose. Il passe bientôt. Mais nos grandes patries resteront, et le souvenir de ces jours mémorables que j'ai passés à Paris me sera surtout précieux parce qu'ils m'ont démontré, de façon éclatante, les sentiments d'amitié et de fraternité que la France ressent pour l'Angleterre. Dans cette fraternité, scellée par notre sang sur tant de champs de bataille, je vois le gage le plus sûr de la paix de l'Europe et de l'avenir de la civilisation.

II

AN ENGLISH ALEXANDRIA[1]

My Lord the Chancellor, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Professors of the University—In the name and on behalf of those upon whom Honorary Degrees have been conferred to-day I thank you for the high honour you have done us. The approbation of others is dear to every man, but doubly precious is the approbation of a great University. The national Universities are the highest tribunals by which the actions and the works of contemporaries can be judged: their judgement anticipates the verdict of posterity. Here in this great University you have men who occupy themselves with every branch of human knowledge. You stand as it were on a Pisgah height from which you look back on the deserts through which mankind has wandered in the past, and you look forward to that Promised Land in the future which some of those gathered in this hall may live to see, and which those of us who are old anticipate for the generations to come. You are not the less, but the better, fitted to take a broad, an impartial survey of men and of their achievements because your University is seated in a city which is one of the very greatest

[1] Speech at the Victoria University, Manchester, May 21, 1924, when Honorary Degrees were conferred by the Right Honourable the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, Chancellor of the University.

centres of industry and commerce in the world. Here in your crowded streets, your busy marts, your humming factories, the pulse of life, the pulse of Empire beats more strongly than in the peaceful, the cloistered seclusion of our ancient Universities. In its patronage—its generous, its enlightened patronage of science and letters, of art, of music, and of eloquence—Manchester ranks with Athens and Alexandria in antiquity, and with Florence in the Middle Ages. You need not fear comparison with these ancient seats of commerce and learning. You are part of a greater Empire than Alexander or Cæsar ever dreamed of, part of the greatest empire that ever the sun shone on. It is the mission of our Universities, and of this University among the rest, to train men for their high, their imperial duties in spreading the reign of knowledge, of justice, and of peace to the utmost ends of the earth, and so hastening the coming of that time—that blessed time foreseen by prophets and predicted by your great Manchester orator, John Bright—the time when "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more".

My Lord the Chancellor, by your high tribunal we, the Honorary Graduates of to-day, have been tried, and the verdict has been something more than an acquittal. After making every allowance for human frailty and imperfection you have decided that the work which in our various spheres we have accomplished has not been without its utility, that we have done something, however little, for the public good. That verdict is a reward for our labours in the past: it is a spur for our labours in the future. The future is necessarily uncertain for us all; but whether it be long or short, the memory of this day and of the

honour conferred upon us by this great University will be with us to the end, cheering us in hours of discouragement and dejection, and nerving us to labour even with our last breath in the service of humanity.

III

WILLIAM COWPER

AN APPRECIATION [1]

The Cowper Society is dispensed from undertaking some of the tasks which naturally devolve on certain other societies devoted to the study of eminent writers. In the first place, it has no need to offer an apology for the character and conduct of the man whom it has chosen for its patron saint. It is unfortunately true that literary genius is often associated with moral obliquity, and in consequence the admirers of a great author are sometimes under a temptation, if not to condone, at least to excuse his frailties and misdeeds. We who are associated by our admiration for the genius of Cowper are happily exposed to no such temptation. For the life of Cowper was blameless: it is fully recorded, the record is public, and so long as he retained possession of his admirable faculties, not a single act or word of his stood in need of apology or defence.

But Cowper was more than a good man; he was also a very lovable man, which implies qualities that are not always united with simple goodness. For a great poet may be a good man without being very

[1] An address delivered to the Cowper Society at Essex Hall, London, April 23, 1920.

amiable. That was, if I am not mistaken, true of two of our very greatest English poets, Milton and Wordsworth. Both were virtuous, animated by an abiding sense of their high calling, conscious of their great talents, and acting ever under a sense of the responsibility which that high calling and those great talents imposed upon them. Yet they passed through life rather admired than loved by those who knew them. There was a certain austerity about both which repelled the endearments of ordinary life. Of both of them it might be said, what one of them said of the other, that his soul was like a star and dwelt apart. We admire the splendour and the steadfastness of the stars, but we hardly love them; they are too solitary, too far removed from this little green earth of ours on which our human joys and hopes and affections are centred. Our dear Cowper was not one of those star-like souls. He trod life's common round like a common mortal, sharing its sorrows, and content to enjoy its simple pleasures—the beauties of nature, the society of books, the converse with friends. And he possessed that link with his fellow-men which Milton and Wordsworth conspicuously lacked, a delicate sense of humour. It may be true that a sense of humour implies a perception of the weaknesses of others, and a certain pleasure, even a malicious pleasure, in their exposure; yet after all in this imperfect world such weaknesses exist, and is it not better to observe than to ignore them? For by observing them and subjecting them to the battery of gentle ridicule we may help to cure them, which we cannot do so long as our eyes are blind to their existence. Be that as it may, it is just in virtue of this perception of human weakness that we feel ourselves more akin to a writer endowed with a sense

of humour than to one who is absolutely destitute of it; since we all, at least most of us, are conscious of manifold imperfections, and we have more in common with one who understands and shares our frailties than with one who is, or seems to be, completely superior and indifferent to them. That, I imagine, is one reason why Plato has touched the heart of humanity much more than Aristotle; for in his dialogues Plato has given proofs of the most exquisite comic as well as tragic powers, powers which, had they been devoted to the drama, might have created masterpieces greater perhaps than any which the genius of ancient or modern times has given to the world. But the mind of Aristotle, to all appearance, was as little sensitive to the humorous side of life as the mind of Newton: the Greek as well as the English thinker might appropriately be represented by that wonderful statue in the chapel of Trinity College at Cambridge, the statue with the

> "prism and silent face,
> The marble index of a mind for ever
> Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone."

I have pointed out one task which the Cowper Society will never need to undertake—the defence of Cowper's character. But there is another task which it will also be spared, though it is one which, if I mistake not, forms a large part of the functions of some other literary societies: it will never have to spend any time in unravelling the author's meaning from the tangle of words in which he has wrapped it up. In a brilliant and, to my mind, convincing essay on the commonplace in poetry Mr. John Bailey has lately drawn incidentally a pathetic picture of the disciples of the late George Meredith sitting with wet towels

round their heads endeavouring to discover what their master meant by some of the seemingly finest passages in his poetry. In the case of Cowper no such mechanical aids to comprehension are needed. If he was not, as in truth he was not, a profound and original thinker, he at least thought clearly and expressed his thoughts with perfect lucidity: there is not, I think we may say, a single obscure or ambiguous sentence in his writings from beginning to end: his poetry and prose alike are models of perspicuous and nervous English, every word telling, not one of them otiose or superfluous. In these respects he is equalled, though not surpassed, by Swift. But if in his writings Swift was as clear as crystal, he was also as hard: his light was dry, brilliant, and fierce: there was nothing in him of the softness, the mellowness, the tenderness which charm us in the writings of Cowper. The difference of style flowed, as usual, from the difference in the character of the men: the one sour, proud, harsh, morose, the other sweet, humble, gentle, kindly: each held a mirror up to nature, but both mirrors reflected the faces of the authors.

If we ask, what are the themes on which Cowper loved most to dwell and from which he drew his inspiration, I think that we may sum them up as nature, books, and the domestic affections. He loved nature simply for itself without, like Wordsworth, weaving round it a glistering web of philosophic thought. The common earth, the common sunshine, the common sights and sounds of rural life were good enough for him: the winding Ouse with the sedge on its banks and the water-lilies on its bosom: the whispering poplars swaying in the breeze and mirrored in the tranquil stream: the cawing rooks, the hooting

owls, the sound of distant bells borne through the clear frosty air on winter mornings—these things sufficed for his happiness: he had no need to see them transfused and transfigured by

> "the gleam,
> The light that never was, on sea or land,
> The consecration, and the Poet's dream."

His descriptions of English landscape make on us much the same impression as the paintings of Constable and Crome: in all three there is the pure delight in the beauty and harmony of colour, in objects suggestive of nothing but innocence and peace, of life spent "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife". Such scenes, whether painted with the brush or drawn with the pen, have not indeed the unearthly splendour of the landscapes of Turner and Milton, those Titanic rivals in the realm of imagination; but they have a power to touch and soothe the heart such as is lacking in the gorgeous creations of the greater artists.

As for Cowper's taste in books I need say little. Without being learned, he was familiar from his youth with some of the finest models of Greek, Latin, and English literature: he had absorbed their spirit, and their influence is apparent in the whole classical tone of his writings. Not that he ever consciously imitated any of his predecessors: he was far too original and too strong to lean on that support of feeble minds, the crutch of imitation. But he wrote in the classical manner, first, because it was congenial to his temperament, and, second, because he had been bred in a classical atmosphere. In him instinct and training happily coincided: there was never the least conflict between the two; and the result of their harmony is a style which in its lucidity, simplicity, and grace is a

perfect model of the classical manner without once reminding us, as the classical style of Milton constantly does, of the idioms of a foreign tongue. With all his genius, there is a touch of pedantry in Milton: there is not a trace of it in Cowper.

The last point which I would mention in this brief estimate of Cowper as a writer is the inspiration which he drew from the strength of his domestic affections. On this also there is no need to dwell. The writer of the lines on his mother's portrait and to Mary will be remembered so long as the English language is spoken on earth; his place in the admiration, the gratitude, and the affection of mankind is secure. But in an age like ours when the foundations of domestic life are assailed, either openly or covertly, from many sides; when the family is treated as an obsolete institution to be abolished in favour of some form of sexual communism; when the very distinction which nature has made between the sexes is as far as possible obliterated; it is well for us and for the world to turn back to the pages of a writer who has dwelt with moving eloquence on the strength of the domestic virtues, the sanctity of the domestic ties, and the tenderness of the domestic affections; for fortified, not merely by his precepts but by the example of his life, we shall be the better able to repel and refute those shallow sophisms which, addressed to the basest of human passions, would subvert the fabric of civilization and plunge us back into that savagery from which it has cost mankind so many generations of painful effort to emerge.

IV

REPLY TO AN ADDRESS[1]

My Friends and Fellow-Students—I am deeply sensible of the honour you have done me by founding in my name a Lectureship of Social Anthropology at four great Universities. Such an honour is usually reserved till the world can judge more fully and impartially of a man's work than it is possible to do in his lifetime. I can only hope that, if posterity should concern itself with my writings, it will not reverse the verdict which you have passed upon them. In any case, you have erected a monument which will no doubt survive him whom you desire to commemorate, and will carry on his work when he himself has long been mingled with the common dust. It is my earnest wish that the lectureship should be used solely for the disinterested pursuit of truth, and not for the dissemination and propagation of any theories or opinions of mine. As you know, I have never sought to formulate a system or to found a school, being too conscious of the narrow limits of my knowledge and abilities to attempt anything so ambitious. I have been content to investigate a few problems in the history of man; but I am well aware, and I have

[1] The Address was presented to the author on the occasion of the foundation of an annual lecture in Social Anthropology to be delivered alternately in the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Glasgow, and Liverpool. Both the Address and the Reply were printed, not spoken.

endeavoured to keep my readers constantly aware, of the extreme uncertainty of all the solutions which I have ventured to offer of these problems, always remembering that the study of man's mental evolution, like the study of the physical universe, in which he appears to exist as an insignificant particle, is still only in its inception, and that the views which we of the present day take of that evolution, as of that universe, are necessarily but temporary and provisional, destined with the progress of knowledge to be superseded by truer and more comprehensive views in the future. To that progress I trust that the lectureship which you have founded may in some measure contribute. At the least, it will be a monument of your generosity, if not of my fame: it will serve to show to those who come after us that in an age when the world was torn into hostile camps and exhausted by internecine conflict, scholars could still meet on common ground, above the clash of arms, in the serene air and untroubled light where truth is sought by her votaries. Whatever else comes of it, the approbation of so many of my contemporaries will act as a spur to my industry: it will encourage me to labour yet a while for the advancement of knowledge, that so I may the better deserve the honour which you have conferred upon me.

1 Brick Court, Temple,
London, 30 *April*, 1921.

VI

MISCELLANIES

I

CONDORCET ON HUMAN PROGRESS[1]

The Rue Servandoni in Paris is a narrow old-fashioned street leading down from the gardens of the Luxembourg to the stately church of St. Sulpice. Into the wall of the house No. 15 is inserted a marble tablet bearing an inscription which informs the passer-by that here Condorcet wrote the *Esquisse des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain*. When the philosopher composed this calm survey of human progress, instinct with a firm trust in the essential goodness of man and in the glorious future that was opening out for him, revolutionary Paris was at the height of the Terror. Every day from the prison of the Luxembourg close at hand the tumbrels were rolling, loaded with human victims, to the place of execution. The writer himself lay under sentence of death and was in hiding from the bloodhounds: the sight of his face at the window might have sealed his fate. An aristocrat by birth, a republican by conviction, he had thrown himself with ardour into the revolutionary movement. He had been a member both of the Legislative Assembly and of the Convention: he had voted for the condemnation, though not for the death, of the King: in conjunction with eight other commissioners, of whom one was Tom Paine, he had been appointed to prepare the plan of

[1] Published in the *Times, Literary Supplement*, March 30, 1922.

a new constitution for France. The plan was drawn up and presented to the Convention, which rejected it and adopted another. Condorcet dared to criticize the new constitution adversely, nay, to denounce it; he even ventured to brand Robespierre, then at the summit of his sinister power, as a man without an idea in his head or a feeling in his heart. This frank opposition was more than the revolutionary assembly, now purged of the moderating influence of the Girondists, could brook. Condorcet was accused of conspiring against the unity of the Republic and condemned in his absence to death. Meantime, without waiting for his trial, which he well knew could have only one ending, the fallen statesman had found a refuge with Madame Vernet, the widow of a sculptor, who kept lodgings at 21 (now 15) Rue Servandoni. For nine months this noble-minded woman kept him safe at the risk of her own life; for in the streets at her door bills posted on the walls denounced in large letters the penalty of death on all who harboured the proscribed. She knew the risk she ran; for when the friends of Condorcet, without naming him, had asked her whether she would shelter a proscribed man, she had asked only, "Is he a good man?" and when they said, "Yes", "Let him come at once", she answered; "you will tell me his name afterwards. Lose not a minute. Even while we speak, your friend may be arrested."

So he came; and as long as he stayed in her house she and the porteress, who was also in the secret and never betrayed it, kept a strict watch on him to prevent him from going out; for, uneasy at the danger in which he involved his hostess, Condorcet meditated flight. At last, alarmed by the rumour of a domiciliary

visit, he contrived to evade her vigilance ; and on the morning of April 5, 1794, imperfectly disguised, he brushed past the porteress and issued on the street. He had not taken many steps when, at the corner of the Rue Vaugirard, into which the Rue Servandoni opens, he was met and recognized by a cousin of Madame Vernet. This brave man, indifferent to his own peril, guided the philosopher safely past the sentinels at the gates to the country house of a family who had received many services and kindnesses from Condorcet in days gone by. They did not admit him. From their inhospitable gate he turned away and wandered for two days without food, sleeping at night in the quarries of Clamart. Late in the afternoon of the third day, driven by the pangs of hunger, he entered a humble tavern and called for an omelette. They asked him how many eggs he would have in it. As a philosopher and secretary for many years of the Academy of Science, Condorcet knew much, but unluckily he did not know how many eggs go to the making of an omelette. He answered at random "Twelve". The reply excited surprise and suspition. He was asked for his papers, but he had none, nothing but a copy of the *Epistles* of Horace. They asked him what was his trade ; he replied, "A carpenter", but his white and delicate hands belied it. He was arrested and marched off to prison at Bourg-la-Reine. Next morning when the gaoler entered his cell to send him under guard to Paris, they found him lying dead. The prisoner had escaped from the prison-house and from the axe of the executioner. The cause of his death is uncertain ; according to his biographer, Arago, it was a strong dose of poison which for some time he had carried about with him. Meantime, at

21 Rue Servandoni, the door was kept on the latch, day and night, for a week in the hope that the fugitive would return. But before the week had expired the fugitive was for ever beyond the reach of his pursuers.

To beguile the tedious hours, and to put away from him the heavy thoughts which might well have dejected and oppressed even a mind so erect and noble as his, during the long sojourn in the Rue Servandoni, almost under the shadow of the guillotine and within hearing of the fatal tumbrels, Condorcet wrote the *Sketch of the Progress of the Human Mind*, the most interesting and valuable of his works. To the student of the workings of the human mind and the human heart it might be of melancholy interest to compare the writings which men occupying high places in the eyes of the world have composed in the near prospect of a sudden and violent death. Not to mention such brief and pathetic pleadings as the petition for a few days' respite which Louis XVI. scrawled in the interval between his condemnation on Saturday and his execution on Monday, and which may still be seen in that most moving collection of revolutionary documents at the Musée des Archives in Paris, we have the sombre eloquence of Raleigh's *History of the World*, composed in a weary imprisonment of many years; the proud verses of Montrose, written at Edinburgh after sentence of death; and the touching letter to his wife written some years later by Argyle before he followed his hereditary enemy from the same prison to the same scaffold with the same lofty serenity.

Among compositions born under such sorrowful circumstances Condorcet's book must always hold a high place. It is remarkable as a work of learning,

written apparently without reference to a single book; it is still more remarkable for the imperturbable confidence which the writer throughout displays, not only in the beneficent character of the revolution, to which he was himself so soon to fall a victim, but in the coming of a new and happier epoch for the whole human race, of which he believed the French Revolution to be the splendid dawn. No thought of his own danger, no rancour at the men who had hounded him from public life and were seeking his head, marred the glad and, indeed, exultant vein of reflection in which he beheld France marching in the van of humanity towards an ever-increasing state of happiness, virtue, and perfection. He was amongst the first, perhaps the very first, to proclaim as a doctrine, and almost as a dogma, the endless perfectibility of human nature.

Of all the philosophers and economists who by their writings had sown the seeds of revolution in France, Condorcet alone survived to reap the harvest; and his book accordingly possesses great interest as his deliberate verdict on the social upheaval which he had done his share to bring about. But the work is much more than a revolutionary manifesto—the profession of faith of a republican who beheld with joy the sweeping away of the hereditary monarchy which he regarded as a fatal clog to progress. It is a philosophic, if not wholly dispassionate, disquisition on the nature of man, his humble origin in the past and his glorious destiny in the future. It abounds in deep thoughts and fruitful suggestions: it raises questions which still agitate the minds of men and may long continue to perplex them: it anticipates several conclusions which modern science has either proved or rendered highly probable; and in indicating certain

existing or threatened evils of far-reaching significance, it proposes some remedies or palliatives which civilized societies have since adopted or may be driven to adopt hereafter. It may interest the reader to have a few specimens of these thoughts and suggestions extracted for him from a treatise which deserves more attention than it receives at the present day.

In the first place, then, Condorcet recognized and fully accepted the modern conception of the universal reign of natural law. The sole foundation, he says, of the belief in the natural sciences is the idea that the universe is regulated by necessary and constant laws, and there is no reason to think that the development of man's intellectual and moral faculties is exempt from the laws which determine all the other operations of Nature. That development, he held, has been slow and gradual, beginning at a rudimentary stage at which man hardly, if at all, differed from the rest of the animals, and progressing by a regular gradation of phases to the most advanced civilization of the present day, which is itself merely a passing phase destined to be far transcended hereafter. The fundamental kinship of man with the lower animals—a notion which the theory of evolution has since so strongly confirmed—is dwelt upon by Condorcet again and again. In order to explain the progress of the human species, he says, there is no need to have recourse to an essential distinction between man and the lower animals, to imagine that he possesses a soul different from theirs. Animals reason like men: like men they form abstract ideas, since without abstract ideas reasoning is impossible; and like men they have moral sentiments, though of a more rudimentary sort. Thus he tells us that in following the march of Nature in the development of beings

endowed with sensibility and thought there is no sudden break, no gaping hiatus; we pass by insensible gradations from the brute to the savage, and from the savage to Euler and Newton. In short, as he puts it elsewhere, while man stands at the head of the scale of animated being, he still shares the nature and belongs to the family of the beasts. But if he thus may seem to imply, he nowhere explicitly formulates, the modern theory of the evolution of the human species out of lower forms of animal life.

Like Darwin and Westermarck, our philosopher held that the earliest human society was the family, consisting of parents and children, and that the long infancy of the offspring, necessitating prolonged parental care, was a principal source of the institution of marriage and of the development of morality. Like Adam Smith, he based the moral sentiments on sympathy, on an instinctive and organic feeling of uneasiness at sight of the sufferings of others and a consequent impulse to relieve them. Without such sympathy he thought that the life of the family and of society in general was impossible. He believed that the progress of civilization, as manifested in the formation of the larger social groups, the invention of the arts, and the growth of morality, resulted from the natural development of human faculties and not from a primitive revelation, communicated by a deity to the ancestors of the race and handed down by tradition to their descendants. In contrast to the opinion of Rousseau, who held, or professed to hold, that the change from savagery to civilization was a process of degeneration and corruption, Condorcet maintained that it involved an intellectual and moral amelioration of mankind: he denied that the advance of knowledge

is answerable for the vices of civilized nations : on the contrary, he argued that it directly assists the progress of morality by enlightening men as to their true interests, since immoral actions are often simply the effect of ignorance, of a failure to understand that the interests of the individual are identical with the interests of the community.

Consistently with this view, Condorcet paid much attention to those errors which have retarded human progress. Firmly believing in the revolutionary creed of his contemporaries, he accepted the watchwords of liberty and equality as summing up the means whereby mankind could most readily attain to the highest state of happiness and perfection ; and by this standard he judged the errors committed by men in the past. Among these errors, and the practical evils which flowed from them, he numbered the hereditary transmission of power, and the social inequality of women compared with men. Hereditary power, in his opinion, is the source of the slavery under which almost the whole of mankind has groaned : he looked forward to its universal abolition in the future and to the substitution of republics based on the French model, which already, he thought, commended itself to all the enlightened heads of Europe. With regard to the subjection of women, he considered that it rested on no natural basis of a physical, intellectual, or moral difference between the sexes : he declared that it was a sheer abuse of force, which no sophisms could justify : he affirmed that in the past it had reacted injuriously on the general happiness, including that of the men themselves, and that the equalization of the rights of men and women would be one of the most important and most beneficial features of progress in the future.

Another of the disastrous errors which had retarded the advance of mankind he believed to be religion. On this subject the humane and gentle Condorcet was as fierce and uncompromising an iconoclast as Lucretius himself, as firmly convinced of the countless and unspeakable calamities which faith in the supernatural had inflicted on a suffering humanity. The earliest of all savage superstitions, according to him, was a belief in the survival of the soul after death, and the second was the belief in gods. While men are naturally disposed by their emotional nature and analogical reasoning to adopt these two fundamental articles of the religious creed, this natural disposition has been greatly strengthened by the teaching of priests, who, though their leisure enabled them to make some advances in natural science, and particularly in astronomy, studiously abstained from enlightening the ignorant masses by their superior knowledge; or rather they imparted only so much of it, and in so debased and corrupt a form, to their fellows as seemed likely to retain them in a state of servile subjection to their spiritual guides and directors. For the real aim of these priestly sages, according to Condorcet, was not to advance the boundaries of knowledge, but to acquire an absolute control, for their own selfish ends, over the minds of the multitude: they sought truth only to diffuse error, so we need not wonder that they rarely discovered it. By mixing an element of the supernatural and miraculous in all their teaching they ministered to the credulity and inflamed the superstitions of the people, that they themselves might be regarded as superior to common humanity, as invested with a sacred character, as the instruments of a divine revelation

disclosed to themselves and denied to all the rest of mankind.

Thus Condorcet held that the priesthood was an institution which had exerted a twofold influence on human progress: it had advanced knowledge, yet diffused error: it had enriched science with fresh truths, yet plunged the multitude deeper in the quagmire of ignorance and superstition. There can be little doubt that in these views Condorcet has exaggerated both the intellectual accomplishments and the moral obliquity of the class of men whom he criticized: the great mass of priests in all ages have neither been such sages nor such knaves as he imagined. Indeed, his vehement prejudice against religion has warped his general view of human history. He had an eye only for the evil and suffering, doubtless incalculably great, which have been wrought by certain creeds, but he was blind to the comfort and solace, the inspiring hopes, and the active beneficence which have flowed from other creeds, or even from different aspects of the same.

In his history of human error Condorcet has to some extent anticipated the theory of Max Müller that mythology springs from a disease of language. Primitive speech, he points out, is largely metaphorical, because early man lacks words to express abstract ideas. In course of time the metaphorical language in which priestly sages clothed certain simple natural truths was misunderstood by the people, who accepted the statements in their literal instead of their figurative sense, and thereby fell into extravagant errors and preposterous forms of superstition, believing, for example, that the heavenly bodies were men, animals and monsters, whereas the priests, though they de-

scribed them as such, well knew them to be nothing but stars. In purely verbal misunderstandings of this sort Condorcet imagined that almost all known religions had taken their rise. The theory is too shallow and too improbable to deserve a serious refutation.

While Condorcet acquiesced in the teaching of philosophy and history as to man's humble origin and chequered career in the past, he embraced with ardour the doctrine of his indefinite perfectibility in the future ; nay, he regarded perfectibility as a general law of nature applicable alike to all organic beings, whether animal or vegetable. The last part of his *Sketch of the Progress of the Human Mind* is devoted to speculations on the course which humanity may be expected to follow hereafter in its progress towards that state of absolute perfection which it will continually approach without ever actually attaining to. He believed that the advance of medicine and of sanitary science would result in abolishing disease and prolonging human life indefinitely, though not for ever, so that death, when it comes, will be the effect either of accident or of simple exhaustion of the vital powers, which will be postponed to an ever remoter period. He held that the intellectual and moral faculties of man, like his physical constitution, are susceptible of limitless improvement, and that accordingly we may anticipate for humanity a steady growth in wisdom and virtue. He looked forward to the abolition of slavery and the cessation of war, which men will come to regard as the most fatal scourge and the most heinous of crimes. Free trade will prevail throughout the world, spreading from France and North America to the remotest corners of Asia and Africa ; even the Machiavellian government of Great Britain, it appears,

will be forced to fall obsequiously into the wake of these pioneers of commercial liberty. Trading corporations with exclusive privileges, like the Dutch and English East India Companies, will be things of the past, and their counting-houses in foreign parts—those dens of robbers where the plunder of oppressed nations is heaped up to serve as a fresh instrument of tyranny at home—will be replaced by colonies of citizens, who will diffuse among the benighted peoples around them the light of reason and the principles of liberty.

With entire freedom of commerce and industry, with the abolition of prohibitive laws, fiscal duties, and cumbersome legal formalities, inequalities of fortune will tend to disappear, and with them that inequality of classes which is one of the evils of our existing civilization. As a means of reducing the disadvantage under which the working classes labour by comparison with those who have inherited a competence, Condorcet suggested a system of insurance whereby the savings of the workers would provide a fund for the payment of old-age pensions and the support of widows and orphans under age. Such a system of insurance, he thought, could be organized either by government or by private associations. Education in time will be extended to every member of the community, but it will not be carried to the same pitch for all : natural differences of ability between man and man will still exist, but the superiority of talent and learning will be for the advantage even of those who do not share it, since they will benefit by the instruction of their betters. Science and education alike will progress through the improvement of technical methods and the formation of a universal language, which, by expressing all ideas with perfect exactness, will lend a rigorous

precision to knowledge and render the acquisition of truth easy and the commission of error almost impossible. Applied to the social and moral sciences, the calculus of probabilities promises to be extremely fruitful by giving to their results an almost mathematical degree of accuracy and certitude, thus opening up to future generations a source of enlightenment as inexhaustible as the number of the facts that can be submitted to its operations.

Yet with all his glowing hopes for the destiny of our species, Condorcet saw clearly some of the rocks that loom ahead of mankind in the nearer or more distant future and threaten to wreck the ship of progress. He anticipated the problem which was afterwards raised in an acuter and more insistent form by Malthus. With the progress of science and industry the earth will undoubtedly be made to yield a greater quantity of food, and hence to support a larger population; but must there not come a time when the increase of the inhabitants of the globe will exceed the increase of the means of subsistence, with the result either of widespread misery or of a reduction of the population, which in turn could not be effected without acute suffering? Thus it might be argued that the perfectibility of the human species is strictly limited by the amount of sustenance that can be extracted from the earth, and that though progress may possibly reach that limit, it can never transcend it.

Plausible as the argument may sound, Condorcet refused to admit it as conclusive. He observed that, should such a time ever come, it must necessarily be at a very distant date, and that in the interval mankind will infallibly have attained a degree of knowledge and enlightenment of which we at present can hardly form

an idea. Who, he asked, would venture to predict what may one day be done by art for the conversion of the elements into substances fit for human use? And even though population should ultimately reach a limit inexorably set by Nature to life on this planet, Condorcet did not despair; for, as he pointed out, men could meet and evade the difficulty by limiting the production of food to the amount necessary to maintain the inhabitants of the earth in welfare and comfort, so that there would be no need to reduce the surplus population by the cruel and barbarous expedients of abortion and infanticide.

Having concluded his picture of the glorious future of humanity, advancing ceaselessly in the way of truth, of virtue, and of happiness, Condorcet falls at last into a strain of pensive, yet triumphant, meditation on the inward joy and peace which, in a sad and troubled world, the thought of that endless advance is fitted to afford to the mind of the philosopher. It consoles him, he tells us, for the errors, the crimes, and the wrongs with which the earth is still stained, and of which he himself is often the victim. It is in the contemplation of that picture that he receives the reward of his labours for the progress of reason and the defence of freedom. It is in such moments that he ventures to link his own efforts to the eternal chain of human destiny: it is then that he finds the true meed of virtue in the accomplishment of a lasting good, which no vicissitudes of fortune can undo, and no revolution of time can reverse. This contemplation is for him an asylum whither the memory of his persecutors can never pursue him: it is there that, dwelling in thought with man reinstated in his rights and in the dignity of his nature, he forgets man as he is tortured

and corrupted by greed, by envy, and by fear: it is there that he truly lives in the company of his peers, in an elysium which his reason has created and which his love for humanity adorns with the purest delights.

With these words, sounding like a benediction, Condorcet brings his treatise to a close. Whatever may be thought of the truth or falsehood of his speculations, few will deny that the book does honour to the character of the writer as a man and a friend of his kind. Of it may be said, with at least equal justice, what has been said of the great speech of Demosthenes, "On the Crown", that it "breathes the spirit of that high philosophy which, whether learned in the schools or from life, has consoled the noblest of our kind in prisons, and on scaffolds, and under every persecution of adverse fortune." In that high philosophy Condorcet sought and found consolation in the clouded evening of his life; and if humanity should ever build a temple to its great men, a niche among the saints and martyrs may well be reserved for the author of the *Sketch of the Progress of the Human Mind.*

II

THE ROAD TO THE SCAFFOLD[1]

In reply to my courteous critic I certainly cannot prove that Condorcet in his hiding-place in the Rue Servandoni could hear the rumbling of the carts that carried the condemned to the place of execution. I can only indicate the grounds that led me to think (perhaps wrongly) that he may have done so. His biographer, Arago, tells how, when Condorcet escaped from Madame Vernet's house in the Rue Servandoni, he ran up the street to the corner of the Rue Vaugirard, where he was met and stopped by M. Sarret. He then goes on as follows: "*C'était à dix heures du matin, en plein soleil, dans une rue très fréquentée, à la porte même de ces terribles prisons du Luxembourg et des Carmes d'où on ne sortait guère que pour aller à l'échafaud.*"

From this passage I inferred, somewhat too hastily as I now perceive, that the death-carts or tumbrels called daily at the prison of the Luxembourg to take up the toll of victims for the scaffold; and I thought, as I still think, that if they passed westward along the Rue Vaugirard, which skirts the whole length of the Luxembourg Palace and Gardens on the north, the

[1] Letter published in the *Times*, *Literary Supplement*, April 20, 1922, in reply to a critic who had objected to a passage in the foregoing essay on the ground that prisoners were not carted direct from the Luxembourg to the scaffold.

noise of their passage must have been audible in any part of the short Rue Servandoni, which opens directly out of it. The Rue Vaugirard, so far as it skirts the Luxembourg, is still a noisy thoroughfare. The motor-omnibuses run along it, pass the top of the Rue Servandoni, and turn down the next street to the west (now the Rue Bonaparte) in going towards the Seine. This would be a natural route for the carts to follow on their way to the Place de la Révolution (now the Place de la Concorde), where most of the executions took place. Further, there seems to be no doubt that the Luxembourg was used as a prison for political offenders (real or suspected) during the whole of the Terror, and therefore during the time when Condorcet was in hiding in the neighbouring Rue Servandoni. It was in the Luxembourg that Hébert and the Hébertists were confined for some days in March 1794 ; it was in the Luxembourg that, not many days later, Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and the rest were imprisoned, and it was round it that the faithful wife of Desmoulins wandered day and night during his detention ; it was in the Luxembourg that Tom Paine was shut up in the same year from January to near the end of July, when he only escaped by an accident from being executed with the last batch of prisoners who were beheaded under the Terror. The turnkey, who marked with chalk the doors of the prisoners who were to be executed next day, happened to put the mark on the wrong side of Paine's door, so he was not in the fatal cart which went to the place of execution on July 27. That same day Robespierre himself, after the stormy scene of his accusation in the Convention, was conveyed a prisoner to the Luxembourg, but the gaoler refused to admit him. In the evening, the glad

tidings of his arrest having spread through Paris, people signalled a message of hope to the prisoners in the Luxembourg from the adjoining roofs and sky-lights. Nevertheless, the tumbrels wended their way as usual that evening to the place of execution; and though in the Faubourg St. Antoine (far certainly from the Luxembourg) the populace tried to stop them, Henriot and his satellites, with brandished swords, drove them back and sent all the prisoners, forty-five in number, to the scaffold.

All this might seem to show that the tumbrels commonly, if not regularly, went with the condemned from the Luxembourg to the place of execution. And so I thought at first. But having, under the stimulus of my critic's letter, looked into the question more closely, I see reason to change my opinion. For from such ordinary authorities as lie to my hand I gather that, when prisoners were about to be tried, it was customary, for the sake of convenience, to remove them from the other prisons to the prison of the Conciergerie, which immediately adjoined the Palais de Justice, and that after condemnation they were again committed to that prison for the short interval before execution. This was certainly done with Marie Antoinette and with Madame Roland, who had previously been confined in the Abbey prison, and who from her cell in the Conciergerie heard the screams of prisoners being taken out to execution from the adjoining cells. It appears also to have been done with the Hébertists and the Dantonists, both of whom, as I have said, had been at first lodged in the Luxembourg. Finally, it was in the Conciergerie that Robespierre, after his rejection at the Luxembourg, was confined for the few hours preceding his execution:

there he occupied the same cell which, only a few months before, had been tenanted by his guilty accomplices and victims, Hébert and Danton. But the Conciergerie is on the other side of the river from the Luxembourg, and therefore far out of hearing of any one in the Rue Servandoni; so that it becomes, thus far, impossible that Condorcet could have heard the rumble of the death-carts on their ordinary round. It is just possible that they sometimes called to take up victims at the Luxembourg, and the case of Tom Paine points in that direction. But, of course, he may, like others, have been removed from the Luxembourg to the Conciergerie for convenience of execution. Whether he was so or not may perhaps be known from his own testimony, which is, I think, on record, though it is not accessible to me as I write. But even supposing that the tumbrels sometimes went from the Luxembourg, it would not necessarily follow that they would be audible in the Rue Servandoni; for instead of following the Rue Vaugirard westward, as I have supposed, they might, on issuing from the main gate, have crossed that street and gone down the broad Rue de Tournon, which leads straight through the Rue de Seine to the river. In that case also they would have been out of hearing of any one in the Rue Servandoni.

On the whole, everything considered, I agree with my critic in thinking it very unlikely that Condorcet in the Rue Servandoni ever heard the rumble of the death-carts. I thank my friendly critic for his stimulating and instructive criticism. The interesting information which he gives as to a general practice of carting the condemned straight from the Court to the scaffold, and as to the route followed by the carts, was quite new to me. It adds a fresh horror

to the Terror, but I see no reason to question its accuracy.

Note on "The Road to the Scaffold".

Since the preceding letter was first published I have consulted the *Memoirs of the Life of Thomas Paine* by W. T. Sherwin. The author quotes a letter written by Paine from America in which he describes his narrow escape from death on the scaffold. As the passage may be thought to throw light on the question here discussed I will quote it entire. Paine says: "One hundred and sixty-eight persons were taken out of the Luxembourg in one night, and a hundred and sixty of them guillotined the next day, of which I know I was to have been one; and the manner I escaped that fate is curious, and has all the appearance of accident. The room in which I lodged was on the ground floor, and one of a long range of rooms under a gallery, and the door of it opened outward and flat against the wall, so that when it was open the inside of the door appeared outward, and the contrary when it was shut. I had three comrades, fellow-prisoners with me, Joseph Vanhuile of Bruges, since president of the municipality of that town, Michael Robins, and Bastini of Louvain. When persons by scores and hundreds were to be taken out of prison for the guillotine, it was always done in the night, and those who performed that office had a private mark or signal by which they knew what rooms to go to, and what number to take. We, as I have said, were four, and the door of our room was marked unobserved by us, with that number in chalk: but it happened, if

happening is a proper word, that the mark was put on when the door was open and flat against the wall, and thereby came on the inside when we shut it at night, and the destroying angel passed by it. A few days after this Robespierre fell, and the American ambassador arrived and reclaimed me, and invited me to his house." [1]

Thomas Paine was released from the Luxembourg on the 4th of November 1794, after having been in confinement for eleven months.[2] Condorcet took refuge in the neighbouring Rue Servandoni early in July 1793 and he quitted it on the 5th of April 1794.[3] Thus the period of Paine's imprisonment in the Luxembourg coincided for some months with the period of Condorcet's concealment in the Rue Servandoni. From Paine's own narrative he appears to have thought that the condemned prisoners were carted direct from the Luxembourg to the scaffold, and evidently he believed that but for an accident he would himself have made this last journey with the hundred and sixty who were beheaded in one day shortly before the fall of Robespierre. But his narrative is not free from difficulties. If a hundred and sixty-eight prisoners were taken out, what became of the eight who escaped the guillotine? Surely they must have been tried and acquitted. And if eight were tried, why not the whole hundred and sixty-eight? And further it seems strange that Paine

[1] *Memoirs of the Life of Thomas Paine, with Observations on his Writings, Critical and Explanatory. To which is added an Appendix, containing several of Mr. Paine's Unpublished Pieces.* By W. T. Sherwin, London: published by R. Carlile, 55 Fleet Street, 1819, pp. 161 *sq.* This passage is reprinted in *The Life of Thomas Paine*, by G. Vale (New York, 1841), p. 120.

[2] *Memoirs of the Life of Thomas Paine*, by W. T. Sherwin, p. 159.

[3] Arago, "Biographie de Caritat de Condorcet", in *Œuvres de Condorcet*, vol. i. pp. cxxxv, cli.

should have been marked for execution, since there appears to be no record of his ever having been tried and condemned. He was arrested and committed to prison under a decree for imprisoning persons born in England, and from the day of his arrest in 1793 to the day of his release in 1794 he seems never to have been outside the prison walls. Though born in England, Paine was an American citizen, and during his long imprisonment the Americans resident in Paris appealed to the Convention to set him at liberty, but the Convention rejected the appeal on the ground that Paine was born in England.[1] How then could Paine have been sent direct to the scaffold without so much as the pretence of a trial? Carlyle says that "Fouquier had pricked him at last",[2] but what authority the historian had for saying so does not appear. In any case we may accept Paine's evidence that prisoners were taken out of the Luxembourg "by scores and hundreds" for the guillotine, though probably some or all of them went through the form of a trial before being carted to the scaffold. If the carts which conveyed them from the Luxembourg either to trial or to execution passed along the Rue Vaugirard, Condorcet can hardly have failed to hear them rumbling over the cobbles, which were, and still are, a feature of the older streets of Paris, adding perceptibly and painfully to the roar of the traffic.

In the chapter of the unofficial and somewhat rhetorical *Mémoires sur les Prisons* which deals with the prison of the Luxembourg, we read of "that fatal, that disastrous night, when a hundred and twenty-nine victims were snatched from slumber to be dragged

[1] *Memoirs of the Life of Thomas Paine*, by W. T. Sherwin, pp. 149-153.

[2] Carlyle, *The French Revolution*, bk. vi. chap. vii. (vol. iii. p. 212, ed. C. R. L. Fletcher).

in chariots to the shambles. Who could depict the consternation and the alarm of those who saw their comrades, their friends, their relatives quitting their rooms to be dragged to the scaffold?" [1] But probably we are not to understand this literally; for other passages in these memoirs seem clearly to imply that prisoners in the Luxembourg and other prisons were regularly haled before the revolutionary tribunal before being executed, and that sometimes at least they were transferred to the prison of the Conciergerie on the eve of their trial. But so few escaped with life from the bar of that sanguinary tribunal that their comrades and friends who saw them depart commonly gave them up for lost, regarding the court of justice, or rather of injustice, as merely a halting-place on the road to the scaffold. The dreadful apprehension which the arrival of the carts excited among the prisoners is vividly described by some of those who lived to tell the tale.[2]

In this connexion it should not be forgotten that, as Arago reminds us, Condorcet in the Rue Servandoni was not far from another prison, that of the Carmelite Monastery or the Abbey, which attained an infamous notoriety in the September massacres of 1792, and from which even after these terrible days prisoners hardly issued except to go to the scaffold. The Carmelite Church of St. Josephe-des-Carmes, in the crypt of which are still preserved bones and other relics of the massacre, is situated in the Rue Vaugirard a little to the west of the Luxembourg; the adjoining edifice is now occupied by the Catholic Institute. If the carts conveying the prisoners from the Abbey to

[1] *Mémoires sur les Prisons* (Paris, 1823), ii. 168.

[2] See *Mémoires sur les Prisons*, i. 251-255, 257-263, 296-300; ii. 154 *sq.*, 169, 171, 173-178, 189-192.

trial or execution drove along the Rue Vaugirard in the direction of the Luxembourg, they must have passed the head of the Rue Servandoni, which issues on that thoroughfare, and their rumble must have been perfectly audible to Condorcet in his hiding-place at No. 15 (now No. 21).

III

PAX OCCIDENTIS: A LEAGUE OF THE WEST

The following essay was written in 1906, at a time when the formidable increase of the German armaments by sea and land, taken in conjunction with the traditional policy of Prussia, which had already waged three successful wars of aggression and conquest within my lifetime, plainly foreshadowed the catastrophe that was to overtake Europe and the world in 1914. I thought, and still think, that the catastrophe could have been averted by a defensive league of European powers such as I have outlined in these pages; for even if the league had comprised France and England alone, Germany would not have dared to attack it, and the world would thus have been spared the unspeakable horrors of the Great War with all its calamitous consequences. I offered the essay for publication to the *Independent Review*, but the editor declined it. His letter, which I retain, is dated September 4, 1906. I here reprint my essay exactly as I wrote it in 1906 without the change of a word. It may perhaps pass for a Sibylline leaf.

9th November 1926.

Pax Occidentis: A League of the West

Never perhaps have the aspirations after a permanent peace between the nations been more deeply and widely felt than at present; never, certainly, has there been so fair a prospect of realising them. Of the measures which have been proposed to accomplish an end so desirable some are clearly impracticable or inexpedient. Such, for example, is the proposal that the Great Powers should agree among themselves to diminish their armaments. No doubt a general reduction of armies and navies would afford a welcome relief to industry and commerce, and by setting free resources which are now devoted to accumulating and perfecting the means of destruction would facilitate progress in many directions. But the difficulties in the way of inducing all the nations to disarm simultaneously are probably insuperable. And the disarmament of a single nation, or even of a group of nations, would, as things are at present, be worse than useless. By provoking the aggression of powerful and unscrupulous neighbours, it would precipitate the very catastrophe it was designed to avert. Even if a universal disarmament could be carried out, it would do little or nothing towards ensuring a permanent peace, since it would not remove the causes of strife between the nations. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the armed forces of Europe were small by comparison with what they are now; yet wars were not the less frequent on that account, nay, they were much commoner. Great armaments are indeed to a certain extent a guarantee of peace. When wars are waged by comparatively small bodies of professional men, a nation may embark upon them lightly. But it will hesitate before

it draws the sword when it knows that every active man in the country may be called upon to go to the front, that every family may be desolated by the ravages of war. The proposal, therefore, to further the cause of peace by a universal disarmament may be dismissed as chimerical. It is impracticable, and even if it were practicable it would be ineffective.

Happily the same object may be attained by other means, which are not only theoretically possible but have actually been tried with success,—I mean by the submission of international disputes to arbitration. It is not enough, however, that particular disputes as they arise should be referred to arbitrators, as was done, for example, by England and the United States of America in the case of the *Alabama*, and again by England and Russia in the recent affair of the North Sea. Unless some permanent provision is made for the settlement of differences before they arise, there must always be a risk that the heat engendered on both sides may hurry the nations into war before there is time to submit the dispute to arbitration. There was great anxiety in England while the affair of the *Alabama* was under discussion. Those of us who do not remember—and the younger generation cannot remember—that anxious time may realise something of the gravity of the crisis by the contemporary cartoon in *Punch* called "Waiting for the answer". It represented Britannia leaning on a cannon and looking out across the sea. The tension of feeling created by such incidents, which may happen at any moment, would be greatly lessened if both sides knew beforehand that the dispute would be referred in the ordinary course of affairs to a tribunal in whose justice they could confide. This may be effected by the conclusion

of treaties which provide that any differences arising between the treaty powers shall be settled by arbitration. This measure has been to a limited extent already adopted, but it is capable of a much wider application. It is in order to advocate a great and apparently feasible extension of the principle that I write these lines.

I propose that all the European powers which are sincerely desirous of peace should agree among themselves by treaty :

(1) Strictly to respect each other's territorial and all other rights, as these rights exist at the date of the treaty :

(2) To refer all disputes which may arise among them to the decision of an international tribunal composed of representatives of all the treaty powers, and to pledge themselves that they will loyally accept and act upon that decision :

(3) To defend with all their forces any one of the treaty powers which may be attacked by another power :

(4) To adopt a federal flag to be flown by all the treaty powers along with, below, or above the national ensign, the said federal flag to bear conspicuously some emblem of peace in token of the pacific aim of the federation.[1]

If such a federation could be carried out among the European powers, or a considerable number of them, its advantages would be great and obvious. It would go far to ensure the permanent peace of Europe. For its arms would be purely defensive and pacific.

[1] Merely by way of illustration I would suggest that the flag should display in the centre of the field a dove with an olive branch and the words *Pax Occidentis*. A single star—the Evening Star, the Star of the West—might be placed in the upper corner next the staff.

It would remove all causes of war from among the federal powers, and as against other powers it would take arms only in self-defence. Once formed by the union of a few nations, it might be expected rapidly to gain in public esteem as its disinterested and beneficent objects were more and more fully recognised. Beginning as a League of Peace and Defence between two or three states, it might in time expand into a federation of the whole of Europe: the United States of Europe might stand beside the United States of America as friendly rivals in the promotion of civilisation and peace. And as the number of its adherents increased, so might the scope of the League be extended. More and more questions might come to be submitted for decision to the international tribunal. From being purely a judicial body, a court of appeal in cases of dispute, it might grow into something of a legislative assembly, a House of Representatives, whose resolutions, if ratified by the national assemblies, would be binding on the federal peoples. For example, it might discuss questions of an international coinage, of an international post, of international weights and measures, even of an international language, and might make recommendations to the separate legislatures. Hence in time, instead of meeting only on emergencies, the tribunal might have its regular sittings either in one of the existing capitals or in a new federal capital to be established within a territory which would be denationalised for the purpose.

Among the measures which might be taken to cement the union of the powers in such a federation, not a little weight ought to be attributed to the adoption of a federal flag. For the flag would be the

visible symbol of aims and aspirations, of benefits enjoyed or hoped for, which otherwise might seem too remote and abstract to touch and influence the common man. They err greatly who imagine that men are moved only by a demonstration of their material interests, by a cold calculation of expediency. The heart has its needs, and they are not less but more imperious than those of the head. Hence in politics as in religion, symbolism is a moving force of the highest power because it appeals to the eye, and through the eye to the heart, just as music does through the channel of the ears. Emotions which the tongue is powerless to express rush to the heart at the sight of the national ensign, at the sound of the national anthem. Something of these emotions might be stirred by the sight of the federal flag. It might do more to bind the peoples together than floods of eloquence and rivers of ink. For a similar reason the adoption of a federal anthem might work powerfully in the same direction. People who could not understand each other's speech would yet feel themselves akin whenever the federal flag was unfurled, whenever the music struck up the federal anthem.

It is natural to ask what nations would be likely to join this League of Peace and Alliance. The cordial understanding now happily established between France and England would be a fitting preparation for a still closer union between them. If they led the way, other nations might be expected to follow. The smaller and weaker states in particular would find their account in an alliance which would guarantee their independence, now more or less precarious. That Germany should give in its adhesion to the League is earnestly to be wished, but in the present

position of affairs perhaps hardly to be expected. Europe indeed rejoices to know that the Emperor of Germany has emphatically declared his devotion to peace, and the existence of such a federation as I have sketched would give him an opportunity, which he might welcome, of publicly confirming his declaration by taking a decisive step towards the permanent pacification of Europe. But it is to be feared that autocracy is hardly compatible with membership of a federation, especially of a federation designed to abolish war ; for the last thing which an autocrat can bring himself to relinquish is the sword. For that reason neither Germany nor Russia is likely at present to join a League of Peace. If we further exclude from consideration the Balkan States and Austria, which are in too unstable a position, both inwardly and outwardly, to allow us to calculate on their action or to render a close union with them desirable, there remain Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, England, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. All of these countries are in the enjoyment of a settled and constitutional government : all of them are thoroughly pacific in temper and policy : all of them therefore might be expected to enter sooner or later into an alliance which would practically ensure the maintenance of their independence and the preservation of peace. For the present, therefore, the League would, roughly speaking, comprise the western nations of Europe. But it is to be hoped that it would not always nor long be confined to them. When in the fullness of time the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe obtain, as no doubt they will, that political freedom which is already enjoyed by the western nations, they too, we may confidently anticipate, will

be willing to join a League of Peace; and thus the Federation of the West might become a Federation of Europe. The rise of great powers in the Far East and the Far West will more and more render the union of the European states among themselves imperative, if they are to maintain in the future, I will not say the predominance which they have so long exercised in the past, but at least that degree of influence in the regulation of the world which their strength, their intelligence, and their civilisation justly entitle them to claim. Divided, they will be weak: united, they will be strong; but trained in the exercise of those virtues of self-restraint and self-sacrifice which a federation necessarily requires of its members, they will use their strength, not for aggression, but for defence, if ever they should be assailed, and for the promotion of the best interests of our common humanity.

IV

OUR DEBT TO FRANCE[1]

To the Editor of the "Morning Post".

SIR,—Will you allow me to express the deep regret which I, in common, I believe, with many of my fellow-countrymen, feel at the decision of our Government to exact from France the repayment of the sums which we lent her for the prosecution of the war? It seems to me, as to many, that the decision is not only ungenerous, but in the highest degree unwise and impolitic. If a balance could be struck between the debt which France owes to us and the debt which we owe to France, we believe (I venture to speak for the many thousands of my fellow-countrymen whose silence on the subject is not to be interpreted as acquiescence in the policy of our Government) that the debt would be found to be overwhelmingly on our side and not on that of France. For in the debt are to be reckoned not simply the sums of money that have been spent, but all the sacrifices that have been made by both countries to secure the common victory.

We think, then, that in the blood of her sons and in the devastation of some of her richest provinces France has far more than repaid the pecuniary debt which she incurred for the defence of her national existence and of ours. For only the politically blind,

[1] Letter published in the *Morning Post*, July 1, 1925.

only those whose eyes the whole tragic experience of the war has not availed to open, can fail to see that the blow struck at France and Belgium was aimed ultimately at us, and not at England only but at the British Empire, which it was the hope and the intention of Germany to dismember for her own benefit. This is no political secret ; it was publicly avowed and even taught in schools long before the war ; and the frenzy of jealousy and hatred of our country which blazed out openly in Germany during the war so long as her people felt sure of victory, ought to have taught even the most pacific of us what we should have to expect from a German victory. From that fearful calamity we were saved by the French armies, which stood like a wall between us and the enemy, while the British Empire, almost disarmed by a succession of British Governments insensible of the German peril, was slowly preparing itself for the conflict, like a giant aroused from sleep. To France, therefore, we owe the preservation not only of our Empire, but of our national independence, which would have been trampled under the grinding heel of a victorious Germany.

That is the real debt which we owe to France, and how can we repay it ? It cannot be estimated in money. It would be an insult to our gallant Allies to suggest that by cancelling the pecuniary debt which France acknowledges we could wipe out the infinite obligations under which we and our posterity stand to her. France is no Judas to accept silver or gold as the price of blood. But to cancel the pecuniary debt, to tear up the bonds, or whatever the documents are called which record it, would at least be an acknowledgment of our gratitude which the generous

French nation would warmly appreciate. It would strengthen the real bonds—not paper bonds, but bonds of admiration and affection—which unite our two noble peoples; and by doing so it would serve more than anything else to guarantee the peace of Europe, which in the present temper of the world cannot be assured by fine words and scraps of paper, but only by the strong arms of France and England resolute to draw the sword, if need be, in defence of each other and of that Western civilization of which they are the champions. Yours, etc.,

JAMES GEORGE FRAZER.

June 27, 1925.

V

FRENCH AND ENGLISH CHIVALRY

In a journal intended to draw closer the ties between France and England by helping the two peoples to a better understanding of each other,[1] it may not be inappropriate to recall one feature which the very different characters of the two nations have in common —their chivalry in war. The courtesies which brave men exhibit to gallant adversaries on the battle-field, whether in victory or in defeat, are among the most graceful and most touching manifestations of human nature at its best, and go far to redeem war from the horror of simple butchery. For they imply a union of courage with humanity and even with tenderness, which is all the more impressive because it is displayed under circumstances which, in base natures, give loose to all the vilest passions, and which, even in common men, reveal the latent weaknesses that are usually veiled under the decent conventions of ordinary life. The mind that in the heat of battle, in the intoxication of victory, and in the gloom of defeat can not only stand firm in itself but remember all that is due to the dignity and the feelings of others, must surely be moulded of finer than common stuff and be entitled to that meed of admiration which mankind instinctively

[1] This piece was first published in the *French Quarterly*, No. 1, January 1919.

bestows on those who stand out conspicuously above their fellows by their inbred qualities of head and heart. In the long history of the wars which France and England waged on each other, it is fortunately easy to cull many instances of such noble courtesies. Without making any special researches, I will mention a few familiar instances.

In a fierce and bloody combat, which took place between the French and English under the walls of Calais, King Edward the Third of England fought as a private man and engaged a French gentleman, named Eustace de Ribaumont. The encounter was long and dangerous. The king was twice beaten to the ground, but twice recovered himself. At last victory declared for him, and the Frenchman was constrained to surrender his sword to his unknown adversary, saying, " Sir Knight, I yield myself your prisoner ". After the engagement " the French officers who had fallen into the hands of the English were conducted into Calais, where Edward discovered to them the antagonist with whom they had the honour to be engaged, and treated them with great regard and courtesy. They were admitted to sup with the Prince of Wales and the English nobility, and after supper the King himself came into the apartment, and went about, conversing familiarly with one or other of his prisoners. . . . But he openly bestowed the highest encomiums on Ribaumont ; called him the most valorous knight that he had ever been acquainted with, and confessed that he himself had at no time been in so great danger as when engaged in combat with him. He then took a string of pearls which he wore about his own head, and throwing it over the head of Ribaumont, he said to him, ' Sir Eustace, I

bestow this present upon you as a testimony of my esteem for your bravery, and I desire you to wear it a year for my sake. I know you to be gay and amorous, and to take delight in the company of ladies and damsels: let them all know from what hand you had the present. You are no longer a prisoner; I acquit you of your ransom, and you are at liberty to-morrow to dispose of yourself as you think proper.'"[1]

The son of this gallant king, Edward the Black Prince, not long afterwards proved himself worthy of his father by the elaborate courtesy with which, after the great victory of Poictiers, he treated his royal captive John, King of France. "Here commences the real and truly admirable heroism of Edward, for victories are vulgar things in comparison of that moderation and humanity displayed by a young prince of twenty-seven years of age, not yet cooled from the fury of battle, and elated by as extraordinary and as unexpected success as had ever crowned the arms of any commander. He came forth to meet the captive king with all the marks of regard and sympathy, administered comfort to him amidst his misfortunes, paid him the tribute of praise due to his valour, and ascribed his own victory merely to the blind chance of war, or to a superior providence which controls all the efforts of human force and prudence. The behaviour of John showed him not unworthy of this courteous treatment. His present abject fortune never made him forget a moment that he was a king. More touched by Edward's generosity than by his own calamities, he confessed that, notwithstanding his

[1] Hume, *History of England*, chap. xv. vol. ii. pp. 445 *sq.* (Edinburgh, 1810), referring to Froissart, Bk I. chaps. cxl., cxli., cxlii.

defeat and captivity, his honour was still unimpaired, and that if he yielded the victory, it was at least gained by a prince of such consummate valour and humanity. Edward ordered a repast to be prepared in his tent for the prisoner, and he himself served at the royal captive's table, as if he had been one of his retinue. He stood at the king's back during the meal, constantly refused to take a place at table, and declared that, being a subject, he was too well acquainted with the distance between his own rank and that of royal majesty to assume such freedom. All his father's pretensions to the crown of France were now buried in oblivion. John, in captivity, received the honours of a king, which were refused him when seated on the throne. His misfortunes, not his title, were respected; and the French prisoners, conquered by this elevation of mind more than by their late discomfiture, burst into tears of admiration, which were only checked by the reflection, that such genuine and unaltered heroism in an enemy must certainly, in the issue, prove but the more dangerous to their native country."[1]

At the battle of Fontenoy, when the English Guards, led by Lieutenant-General Campbell, Major-General the Earl of Albemarle, and Brigadier Churchhill, had advanced to within fifty paces of the French Guards, the English officers saluted the French officers by taking off their hats. On the French side the Comte de Chabanes and the Duc de Biron, who were in front, and all the officers of the Guards returned the salute. Lord Charles Hay, captain of the English Guards, then cried out, "Gentlemen of the French Guards, fire!" The

[1] Hume, *History of England*, chap. xvi. vol. ii. pp. 459 *sq.*, referring to Froissart, Bk. I. chap. clxviii.

Comte de Hauteroche, lieutenant in the Grenadiers, answered in a loud voice, "Gentlemen, we never fire first. Fire yourselves!" The English replied by a rolling fire which laid hundreds of their gallant adversaries in the dust. The anecdote is reported by Voltaire, who probably had it from an eyewitness, for he was a contemporary, and his narrative contains features which could only have been known to one who was actually present at the engagement; for example, he tells how, when the English column advanced firing, with slow steps, as if on parade, the officers were seen to press down the muskets of their men with their canes to make them fire low and straight.[1]

After the battle of Dettingen the English, though they claimed the victory, retired from the battlefield and had not time to remove their wounded. Accordingly Lord Stair wrote a letter to the French commander, the Marshal Duc de Noailles, recommending the English wounded to his generosity. The Marshal replied in a courteous letter, and the French cared for the English wounded as if they had been their own countrymen. In this battle the Duke of Cumberland was wounded by a bullet in the leg. When the surgeon was about to dress the wound, it happened that a French musketeer, named Girardeau, danger-

[1] Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XV*, chap. xv. (*Siècles de Louis XIV et de Louis XV*, Paris, 1820, vol. iii. pp. 259 *sq.*). The incident is related, from the English side, somewhat differently by Carlyle on the evidence of a letter which Lord Charles Hay, lieutenant in the Grenadiers, wrote three weeks after the battle. See Carlyle, *History of Frederick the Great*, Bk. xv. chap. viii. vol. vi. pp. 44 *sq.* (London, 1873). Compare J. S. Leadham, *History of England from the Accession of Anne to the Death of George II.* (London, 1909), pp. 386 *sq.* The Earl of Albemarle was Lord Bury at the time of the battle of Fontenoy. His regiment was the Coldstream Guards, of which he was promoted to be lieutenant-colonel about a fortnight after the battle. He did not succeed to the earldom till 1754. See *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. xxxi. (London, 1892) pp. 42 *sq.*

ously wounded, was carried near the duke's tent. The duke at once stopped the surgeon and said, "Attend to this French officer first, his hurt is worse than mine. He might be overlooked, I shall not." [1]

After the battle of Corunna, in which Sir John Moore died a hero's death, "the guns of the enemy paid his funeral honours, and Soult, with a noble feeling of respect for his valour, raised a monument to his memory on the field of battle".[2] In his old age Marshal Soult came to England to represent Louis Philippe at the coronation of Queen Victoria, and received a warm welcome from the English people, who know how to respect and honour a gallant and chivalrous enemy. They cheered him till they were hoarse whenever he appeared in public, and they shook hands with him to such an extent that the Marshal's arm was worn out, and he had to depute the task of hand-shaking to the members of his staff. At Manchester, when the railway carriage conveying Soult entered the station, it was so beset by an enthusiastic crowd clinging to the footboards, clambering on the roof, and thrusting their heads and hands in at the windows, that some time elapsed before the police, by Herculean efforts, were able to wrench open the door of the carriage and make standing-room for the Marshal on the platform, and even then he was all but swept off his feet in the press. As he drove in an open carriage through the streets, he was surrounded and followed by a running mob continually shouting, "Soult for ever!" while their cheers were echoed by tens of thousands of grimy, shrivelled heads projecting in bunches from the innumerable windows of the high,

[1] Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XV*, chap. x. (Paris, 1820, vol. iii. pp. 213 *sq.*).

[2] Sir William Napier, *History of the War in the Peninsula*, vol. i. (London, 1835) p. 510.

black, smoky factories which the Marshal passed in his triumphal progress. When he visited the docks at Liverpool, the banks of the river were crowded with multitudes for the whole distance: the river was covered with boats: every ship, of every nation, was gay with flags; and the shouting and waving of hats were incessant. At Birmingham a public dinner was given in honour of the illustrious guest. In proposing Soult's health, the chairman dwelt particularly on the tribute of respect which the Marshal had paid to the remains of Sir John Moore. This seemed to touch Soult's gallant heart. He rose with great animation, and after rapidly returning thanks for the usual honour paid to his king, he broke out in praise of Sir John Moore and the English army.

"I learned," he said, "to esteem them in the field of battle, and since I have been in England I have acquired a feeling warmer than esteem. I find them as worthy and kind and generous towards their ancient enemies as they are brave and honest in battle, for I speak not alone of their courage when I call them worthy of esteem as enemies. From Lord Wellington and all the British officers whom I had the honour to meet in fight I ever experienced frank and loyal conduct; we fought for our respective countries, but like men without rancour, without any feelings of personal anger. I admire and respect them both as friends and foes, and I now give 'the British Army and Navy'."

To this toast thanks were returned for the British Army by Colonel (afterwards General) Sir William Napier, who had fought against Soult in many pitched battles of the Peninsular War, and of whom it might with truth be said that it was his lot *et facere scribenda*

et scribere legenda. In his speech, in which he referred in terms of warm admiration to "the great French captain who now sits here your honoured guest", there occurs the following passage, which well expresses the feelings of many English hearts at the present time:

"But there is a higher gratification to be derived from this happy meeting by every person who has the welfare of mankind at heart; the hearty, generous reception which has been given to Marshal Soult, and the contentment which he has thereby received, and has this night expressed in such simple, feeling, and dignified language, may be hailed as a sign, a great sign, and a testimony that all ancient feuds, all ill blood, all heartburnings, all hostility between England and France, those two great nations, have passed away and are forgotten, and that henceforth the only rivalry will be a generous emulation in works of peace and utility. England and France! I have called them two great nations. The expression is feeble. They are the two greatest nations in the world. Others may hereafter equal, perhaps surpass them; I know not what may be in the womb of time, but in arts, in arms, in learning, in genius, in power, and in renown they are now unmatched. Their quarrels have heretofore shaken the world, producing great calamity and incalculable evil; their friendship must therefore necessarily produce incalculable good."[1]

A less famous, but not less beautiful instance of French chivalry is recorded in the Peninsular War. In a cavalry skirmish at El Bodon a French officer had raised his sword to strike an English officer,

[1] H. A. Bruce, *Life of General Sir William Napier* (London, 1864), vol. i. chap. xiv. pp. 485, 488 *sqq.*, 492, 500 *sqq.*

Sir Felton Harvey, but noticing that the Englishman had only one arm, he instantly brought down his sword to the salute and rode past.[1] The Englishman lived to tell the tale, but no one ever knew who the Frenchman was. He may have been killed in the next minute. Yet whoever he was, and whatever his rank, this one act, conceived and executed in a flash, proves him to have been a true knight in the finest sense of the word, in the sense that Milton used the word when he said that every free and gentle spirit, without the oath, ought to be born a knight, nor needed the gilt spur or the laying of a sword upon his shoulder to stir him up, both by his counsel and his arms, to secure and protect the weakness of attempted innocence.[2]

The courtesies of war, which French and English soldiers so often exchanged when they met as foes on the battle-field, have not ceased to be reciprocated now that enmity has happily been exchanged for comradeship in arms. When Lille, after four years of occupation, was at last evacuated by the enemy, and the army of deliverance was about to march into the city, an English regiment, which was to have headed the procession, rightly stood aside and allowed a French regiment to take the place of honour and to receive the first overwhelming demonstration of joy heaped by the delivered on the deliverers. And in the great and final advance on the Marne, when the tide of Teutonic invasion was at last stemmed and rolled back, a Highland regiment marched side by side with the French regiments to the assault of the German position. Many Scotsmen and many French-

[1] Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help* (London, 1877), p. 403.
[2] Milton, *An Apology for Smectymnus.*

men fell in the attack, and after the battle the French, with a touching gratitude, set up a monument on the spot to the Highlanders who had come so far from their misty mountains and stormy seas to fight and die for France. On the monument they carved a French inscription, which set forth that " Here the thistles of Scotland will bloom for ever among the roses of France ".

These are among the things that endear the two nations to each other, knitting them together by ties that are indeed ties of blood, and stronger and more enduring than iron. For these and a thousand other reasons, for all the crowded and splendid memories of French achievement in arts and letters as well as in arms, we in this country honour and love the French and are proud to hail them as brothers. The very name of France is a sound to stir our blood as with the blast of a trumpet. To borrow the proud words inscribed over the palace of Versailles, we join the whole civilized world in a tribute of heartfelt affection and admiration

A toutes les gloires de la France.

VI

THE TAKING OF THE REDOUBT

(From the French of Prosper Mérimée.)

A MILITARY friend of mine, who died of fever in Greece some years ago, one day gave me the story of the first affair in which he took part. The narrative struck me so much that I wrote it down from memory as soon as I had leisure. Here it is :

I joined my regiment on the evening of the 4th September. I found the Colonel in camp. He received me at first rather brusquely, but after reading the letter of introduction from General B—— his manner changed, and he addressed me a few polite words.

He presented me to my captain, who had that moment returned from a reconnaissance. The captain, whom I had scarcely time to know, was a tall dark man, with hard and repellent features. He had been in the ranks, and had gained his epaulets and cross on the battle-field. His voice, which was hoarse and weak, contrasted singularly with his almost gigantic stature. I was told that his queer voice was due to a bullet which had gone clean through him at the battle of Jena.

On learning that I was fresh from the school of Fontainebleau, he made a grimace and said, " My lieutenant was killed yesterday," I knew he meant to

say : " It's you who are to take his place, and you are not fit for it ". A retort was on my lips, but I checked myself.

The moon rose behind the redoubt of Cheverino, situated a couple of cannon-shots from our lines. It was large and red, as it usually is at rising. But that evening it seemed to me extraordinarily large. For a moment the redoubt stood out black against the bright disk of the moon. It looked like the cone of a volcano at the instant of eruption.

An old soldier beside me remarked the colour of the moon. " It is very red," said he ; " that's a sign it will cost us dear to take it, that blessed old redoubt." I have always been superstitious, and this augury, especially at such a moment, affected me. I lay down, but could not sleep, so I got up and walked for a while, watching the vast line of fires that covered the heights beyond the village of Cheverino.

When I thought that my blood had been refreshed enough by the keen night air, I returned to the fire, wrapped myself up carefully in my cloak, and closed my eyes, hoping not to open them till daylight. But sleep would not come. Gradually my thoughts took a sombre hue. I said to myself that I had not a single friend among the hundred thousand men who covered the plain. If I were wounded I should be in a hospital, carelessly treated by ignorant surgeons. All that I had heard about surgical operations came back upon me. My heart beat violently, and mechanically I arranged as a sort of breast-plate my handkerchief and the pocket-book I carried in the breast of my coat. Fatigue overpowered me ; every instant I was falling asleep, and every instant some sinister thought returned with fresh force, and awoke me with a start.

However, weariness at last prevailed, and when the reveille sounded I was fast asleep. We fell in, and the roll was called; then we stacked arms, and everything seemed to show that we were going to pass a quiet day.

About three o'clock an aide-de-camp arrived with an order. We got under arms again: our skirmishers spread out in the plain: we followed them slowly, and at the end of twenty minutes we saw the Russian outposts falling back and retiring into the redoubt.

A battery of artillery took up position on our right, and another on our left, but both were a long way in front of us. They opened a hot fire on the enemy, who replied vigorously, and soon the redoubt of Cheverino disappeared in thick clouds of smoke.

Our regiment was almost sheltered from the Russian fire by a rise in the ground. Their shots (there were not many of them, for they fired by preference at our artillerymen) passed over our heads, or at most sent us showers of earth and pebbles.

As soon as the order to advance was given, my captain observed me so attentively that I was obliged to pass my hand two or three times over my budding moustache with as easy an air as I could assume. I really was not afraid, the only fear I had was that they might think I was afraid. Besides, these harmless shots helped to keep me in my heroic calm. I was flattered by the idea that I ran a real risk, being now at last under fire of a battery. I was delighted at feeling so much at my ease, and I thought how pleasant it would be to tell of the taking of the redoubt of Cheverino in the drawing-room of Madame de B—— Rue de Provence.

The colonel passed in front of our company; he

spoke to me, " Well, you are going to see sharp work for your beginning." I smiled with a martial air, brushing the sleeve of my coat, which had received a little dust from a shot that had fallen about thirty paces off.

It appeared that the Russians saw the small effect of their shots, for they exchanged them for shells, which could reach us more easily in the dip where we were posted. There was a loud noise, my shako was knocked off, and a man beside me was killed.

" My compliments to you," said the captain when I had picked up my shako, " you have had your share for the day." I knew of the military superstition that the maxim *non bis in idem* applies to a battle-field as well as to a court of justice. Putting on my shako with a jaunty air, " Rather an unceremonious way," said I, " of making a man take off his hat ". It was a poor joke, but in the circumstance it passed for excellent. " I congratulate you," said the captain again, " you'll have no more of it, and you'll command a company to-night, for I know the oven is heating for me. Every time I've been hit the officer next me has received a spent ball, and ", added he, in a lower tone, almost as if he were ashamed, " their names always began with a P ".

By the end of half an hour the Russian fire slackened sensibly ; then we issued from our cover to march on the redoubt.

Our regiment was composed of three battalions. The second was to turn the redoubt on the side of the gully ; the other two were to deliver the assault. I was in the third battalion.

On issuing from the sort of breastwork which had sheltered us, we were met by several volleys of

musketry, which did little harm in our ranks. The whistling of the bullets surprised me. I often turned my head, and so drew down on myself some chaff from my comrades, who were more familiar with the sound. "After all," said I to myself, "a battle is not such a terrible thing."

We advanced at the double, preceded by skirmishers. All of a sudden the Russians gave three hurrahs, three distinct hurrahs, then remained silent and without firing. "I don't like that silence," said my captain, "it means no good to us." I thought our fellows just a trifle too noisy, and could not help mentally contrasting their tumultuous cries with the impressive silence of the enemy.

We soon reached the foot of the redoubt. The palisades had been broken and the earth tumbled about by our shots. The men rushed on these newly-made ruins with shouts of "Vive l'Empereur" much louder than could have been expected from people who had already shouted so much.

I looked up, and never shall I forget the sight I saw. The smoke had mostly risen and remained hanging like a canopy twenty feet above the redoubt. Through a bluish vapour we saw the Russian grenadiers standing behind their half-ruined parapet with their muskets raised, motionless as statues. I think I see them still, every man with his left eye fixed on us, his right hidden by his raised musket. In an embrasure a few paces from us a man with a lighted match was standing beside a gun.

I shuddered and thought that my last hour was come. "Here's a pretty dance about to begin," cried my captain, "good-night." They were the last words I heard him speak.

A roll of drums was heard in the redoubt. I saw the muskets brought down. I closed my eyes, and heard a frightful noise, followed by cries and groans. I opened my eyes, surprised at finding myself still alive. The redoubt was once more wrapped in smoke. I was surrounded by wounded and dead. My captain lay at my feet; his head had been smashed by a bullet, and I was bespattered with his blood and brains. Out of my whole company there were left standing only six men and myself.

This carnage was succeeded by a moment of stupor. The colonel, putting his cap on the point of his sword, was the first to climb the parapet, crying "Vive l'Empereur", and was immediately followed by all the survivors. I hardly remember what followed. I don't know how we got into the redoubt. There was a hand-to-hand fight in the midst of a smoke so thick that you could not see yourself. I suppose I must have used my sword, for it was all bloody. At last I heard cries of victory, and, the smoke clearing a little, I saw the blood and the corpses, which completely hid the soil of the redoubt. The guns especially were buried under heaps of dead. About two hundred men left standing, in French uniform, were grouped without order, some loading their muskets, others wiping their bayonets. Among them were eleven Russian prisoners.

The colonel lay on his back, covered with blood, on a broken caisson close to the gully. Some soldiers were pressing round him, and I joined the group. "Where is the senior captain?" he asked of a sergeant. The sergeant shrugged his shoulders expressively. "And the senior lieutenant?" "Here he is, the gentleman who came yesterday," said the

sergeant quite calmly. The colonel smiled bitterly. "Come, sir," said he, "you are in command. Have the redoubt strengthened with tumbrels immediately, on the side of the gully, for the enemy is in force. But General C—— will support you." "Colonel," said I, "are you badly hurt?" "——— my dear fellow; but the redoubt is taken."

VII

VETERANS OF THE OLD GUARD

December 15

(From the French of Théophile Gautier.)

I was weary, and left my chamber
  To saunter down the street:
'Twas drear December weather,
  Cold wind and rain and sleet.

And there, in the sickly daylight,
  'Scaped from the sunless land,
Through the rain and the mud of the city
  There strode a spectral band.

As a rule ghosts choose to stalk
  By the glint of a German moon
In the ruins of an ivied tower,
  But not in the light of noon.

By night the Water Lady
  Comes in her dripping gown
To drag the wearied waltzer
  Through the water-lilies down.

By night the troops are paraded
  In the ballad of Zedlitz,
Where the shadowy Emperor musters
  The ghosts of Austerlitz.

But spectres in the city !
Ghosts in the crowded lane !
With never a shroud or a grave-cloth,
And dripping, too, with rain !

A really remarkable vision—
Three wraiths of toothless loons
In the facings of the Old Guard
With shadows of dragoons !

As in Raffet's great engraving
The dead go trooping by,
And squadron after squadron
" Napoleon ! " still they cry.

But it was not the dead who wake
To the tuck of the midnight drum :
'Twas a few of the Old Guard keeping
The day of the great Home-come.

Since was fought the final battle
They have grown, one fat, one thin ;
The coat of the one needs letting out,
Of the other, taking in.

Proud rags ! illustrious tatters
With the medal for a star !
I'd sooner wear those tatters
Than reign the Russian Czar !

The draggled plume droops sadly,
The shako is battered and worn,
In the tunic the moth has widened
The holes by the bullets torn.

The buckskins hang in creases
  On thighs all skin and bones,
The rusty sabre rattles
  As it smites on the paving-stones.

Another is stout and breathless,
  He puffs as his brow he wipes,
His coat he can hardly button,
  This hero of medals and stripes!

Nay, sneer not, O my comrade,
  But bow with reverence due
To the men of a greater Iliad
  Than ever Homer drew.

Honour the head so hoary,
  And the brow all bronzed and scored
With the furrows of age and of glory
  Trenched by the slash of sword!

Egyptian suns have darkened
  The skin in boyhood fair;
And Russian snows have whitened
  What once was raven hair.

Their palsied hands are trembling;
  They limp, but do not smile;
For long is the march and weary
  To Moscow from the Nile.

Let the urchin jeer and hollo!
  'Tis not for us to slight
The men who were the morning,
  While we are the eve and the night.

If *we* forget, *they* remember,
Red lancer and blue grenadier :
They are come to the column to worship,
Their only god is here.

Here, proud of all they suffered
By wounds and snows and heats,
They feel, 'neath their tattered garments,
'Tis the heart of FRANCE that beats.

So the laughter is blent with weeping
To see this carnival,
This masque imperial passing,
Like mummers from a ball.

And the Grand Army's eagle,
From its heaven with glory starr'd,
Spreads its golden wings triumphant
O'er the Veterans of the Guard.

VIII

FOR A SCRAP OF PAPER

(From the French of Paul Hyacinthe Loyson.)

Why bursts the cloud in thunder, and to devastate the world
The levin bolt of battle from heaven, or hell, is hurled ?
Why march embattled millions, to death or victory sworn ?
Why gape yon lanes of carnage by red artillery torn ?
For a scrap of paper, for a scrap of paper, nothing more !

Why spurned the least of nations, but the bravest of the brave,
The wages of dishonour and a traitor's peaceful grave ?
Why drew she sword ? and flinging the scabbard far away
Why rushed she into battle, the foremost in the fray ?
For a scrap of paper, for a scrap of paper, nothing more !

When the Queen of Empires summoned her children to her shore,
And to set the ocean rolling she but spoke a word—no more—

"Oh come to me, my children, to your mother, come to me!"
Why flocked the regiments trooping from the lands beyond the sea?
For a scrap of paper, for a scrap of paper, nothing more!

Why hasted all the peoples to confront the bandit crew,
When they heard the tocsin tolling and the blast that Justice blew?
Why thrilled they at the summons, and answered one and all,
By thousand thousands thronging, to the far-blown bugle-call?
For a scrap of paper, for a scrap of paper, nothing more!

When the guns have ceased to thunder and the battle-storm to rave,
When the stars above are calling the last muster of the brave,
As they lie there in their thousands, with their faces to the sky,
We can hear their voices answer, "We were glad and proud to die
For a scrap of paper, for a scrap of paper, nothing more!"

IX

MODERN ITALY AND GREECE

A CONTRAST

A THOUGHTFUL traveller in Greece and Italy can hardly fail to be struck by the paucity of relics of the Middle Ages in the one country, and their frequency in the other. In Greece he may journey for hours or even days together, without seeing any work of man's hand to remind him of the two thousand years or more which divide the stately remains of ancient temples and palaces and fortresses from the mean cottages of the modern peasantry. A few—a very few—fine Byzantine churches, with their mosaics and eikons, the mouldering ruins of Venetian castles, and monasteries which contrast by their squalor and poverty with the natural beauty of their surroundings, are almost the only monuments bequeathed to modern Greece by the centuries which have enriched modern Italy in profusion with all the splendour of mediaeval architecture and sculpture and painting. And it is not merely the rarity, but the style of the remains of the Middle Ages which impresses the mind of a traveller in Greek lands with a melancholy sense of artistic and national decay. He contrasts the stiff grotesque figures and narrow limitations of Byzantine art with the noble freedom and variety of ancient Greek

sculpture: he turns from the rude masonry of the Venetian castles, their rough little stones hastily huddled together without order, to contrast with it the massive solidity and beautiful symmetry of ancient Greek fortifications, where the great blocks are hewn and squared to a nicety, and laid together in such exact order that it is frequently difficult to detect the joinings. Yet these magnificent walls often mark the sites of little towns which played an insignificant part in Greek history, and of which even the names are in many cases forgotten. Few things can testify more eloquently to the populousness and wealth, as well as to the patriotism, the energy, and the skill of those tiny Greek communities, than the ruined but still splendid walls and towers by which they sought to guard their liberty: few things can set in a stronger light the decline of modern by comparison with ancient Greece. It is almost as if in the history of the country the Middle Ages had been blotted out, or as if from the reign of Justinian to the War of Liberation the land had been destitute of human inhabitants or tenanted only by flocks and herds under the charge of a few wandering shepherds and herdsmen.

The causes of this long period of intellectual and moral stagnation, or rather retrogression, are no doubt many and various. By the crushing weight of her financial oppression, Rome at once drained the material resources and sapped the vital energies of the people, while at the same time her world-wide dominion, powerfully seconded by the teachings of a cosmopolitan religion, dissolved the ties of purely local patriotism and broke the spring of those civic virtues which that patriotism had fostered. On the nation, thus impoverished and enfeebled, there fell like an

incubus the long blight of the Turkish dominion, which completed the work of degradation and decay. While the Turk as a man appears to have many good qualities, which win him the esteem of those who know him, the Turks as a people are to all intents as unprogressive as their own sheep and oxen. They may discard the turban for the fez, the yataghan for the bayonet, the bow and arrow for the rifle and the machine gun, but in the frame of their minds and the circle of their ideas they are what their forefathers were, when their hordes emerged from the deserts of Central Asia and trampled under foot the last surviving relics of the Byzantine Empire. In the centuries which have elapsed since they established their alien rule on European soil, have they contributed anything to European literature or science or art? Have they produced a single man who is known to the world at large for anything but the wars he waged or the massacres he ordered? Since the advance of their victorious arms ceased to be a menace to European civilization, Turkey has served only as a makeweight in European politics, to be thrown from time to time into the scales by unscrupulous statesmen in order to trim the balance of power or to incline it in their own favour.

It is one of the many blessings of Italy that she has never been subject to the rule of these Asiatic barbarians, that the Turk has never gained even a foothold on her soil. True, she has bowed her neck to the yoke of many northern invaders from the days of the Goths onward, but barbarous as have been many of her conquerors, they have been at least more or less akin to her in race and language, and some of them have contributed to the glories of Italian art, and

probably also of Italian literature. Certainly these invasions have never for any long period together interrupted the course of native Italian genius. The fall of the Roman Empire was followed by the rise of the separate Italian states, each with its active municipal life, its industries and commerce, its local art and literature. And in Italy the darkness of the Middle Ages was a prelude to the splendid dawn of the Renaissance. The sun of ancient learning which set on Constantinople rose again on Rome: the fall of the Byzantine Empire scattered the dying embers of Greek scholarship and blew them up into fresh fire in Italy, which handed them on to the West. Hence Italy, unlike Greece, is crowded with monuments of the Middle Ages, of the Renaissance, and of the fruitful centuries which have elapsed since that mighty awakening of the European mind: it is haunted by the memories of the great men who in every department of human activity have illuminated and enriched not only their country, but mankind by the energy of their character, the range of their knowledge, the originality of their ideas, the light and fire of their imagination. The busy marts, the great libraries, the magnificent churches, the stately palaces, the glowing canvases, the breathing sculptures in bronze and marble which adorn Italian cities, are only the most obvious, because the outward and visible evidence of that inward spiritual life, so potent, so varied, so abundant, which has animated the Italian people uninterruptedly from antiquity till now. What a debt does not the world owe to Italian merchants and explorers, to Italian artists and craftsmen, to Italian poets and musicians, to Italian scholars and thinkers! Contrast the amazing fertility of the Italian genius in

mediaeval and modern times with the almost absolute sterility of the Greek in the same period. Since the final separation of the Eastern from the Western Empire, what has Greece contributed to the sum of human thought, to the progress of human knowledge, to the improvement of human society? If we except the legislation of Justinian, which was rather a codification of old Roman law than a fresh contribution to jurisprudence, the Byzantine Empire produced nothing of value for the general amelioration of our race: it gave birth to no single great writer or philosopher or artist whose influence extended far beyond the limits of his native land, and whose name the world will not willingly let die. And the same blight which sterilized the Greek genius through the Byzantine period persisted under the Turkish dominion, and has continued with little change from the War of Liberation to the present day. In literature, in science, in art, the map of modern Greece might almost be a blank for all that the country has contributed to the higher departments of thought, to the noblest activities of the human mind.

In these, as well as in the sphere of politics, Greece has been far outstripped by her ancient rival, and lives, like Spain, for the world at large chiefly in the memory of her glorious past. Of the three great southern peninsulas which were touched by the early beams of civilization while the rest of Europe was still plunged in darkness, Italy alone has kept the sacred fire burning on her altars from then till now. Naturally one of the most beautiful countries on earth, she is historically perhaps the most interesting of all, by reason of the long unbroken development which links her present to her past. She is the golden bridge across which we can still travel in thought back through the

night of the Middle Ages to the sunset glory of the antique world: she is like one of her own ancient aqueducts which still bring to the heart of the Eternal City a current of living water from the purple mountains that loom, faint and dim as dreams, on the far horizon. *Hinc lucem et pocula sacra.*

X

UNDER A TUSCAN CASEMENT

He sings :

The moon is up above the wood
  It shimmers on the lake.
I'm here beneath your window,
  Awake, my love, awake !

On yonder spray the nightingale
  Attunes her love-lorn lay.
O listen to a lover's tale,
  Too soon will break the day.

I've come so far, fair lady,
  So many a weary mile,
To see your golden ringlets,
  To win your bonny smile.

Then come away, my dearest,
  Sweet Lisa, come with me,
Far far beyond the forest,
  Across the rolling sea.

She opens the casement and sings :

Who bids me leave in danger
  And care my native strand,
To roam with him, a stranger,
  To some far foreign land ?

He sings :

O, I'm a knight, fair lady,
With sword and steed and lance,
And that far foreign country
Is the gay land of France.

She sings :

They tell me it is lovely,
That land of chivalry,
But no hearts can beat so kindly
As at home in Tuscany.

He sings :

The night grows late, sweet lady,
O haste thee for my sake !
See, see above the mountains
The day begins to break.
[*A red flush spreads over the eastern sky.*]

The time of love soon closes.
So sweet, so dear it seems,
It passes like the roses,
Like youth, like spring, like dreams.

She sings :

What will you give your dearest,
If she should go with thee,
Far far beyond the forest,
Across the rolling sea?

He sings :

I'll give thee jewels, lady;
The richest shall be thine,
The pearls of the ocean,
The rubies of the mine.

She sings :

Dearer to me than jewels
Is every flower that blows.
Rather than Indian rubies
I'd wear a Tuscan rose.

He sings :

A crown of gold I'll give thee,
Bright as the sun its sheen ;
For I'm of France the monarch,
And you shall be the queen.

She sings :

Who speaks of crowns and jewels,
The beams of light they dart,
May gain the hand of maiden,
But not the maiden's heart.

A crown could win me never,
No royal grace I sue,
But will you love me ever ?
O will you love me true ?

They speak of love that's deathless,
Of troth that lasts for aye,
Of hearts that beat together,
Though all the seas run dry.

They say that souls once plighted,
When life's brief dream is o'er,
Will meet beyond death's river,
Will meet to part no more.

Then tell me that you love me,
  Will love in endless trust,
When loving lips are silent,
  And loving hearts are dust.

He sings :

Come joys or come distresses,
  I'll love thee then as now,
When all your golden tresses
  Are silvered on your brow.

It shall be yours for ever,
  My living, dying love,
We'll only part, my darling,
  To meet in heaven above.

She sings :

O then, I'll come, my dearest,
  I'll come away with thee,
Far far beyond the forest,
  Across the rolling sea.

XI

THE STUDENT'S DREAM

A FRAGMENT

The day was done, and softly
The sunset whispered, Rest!
So I laid my books by the window
And gazed on the golden west.

I had read of saints and sages,
Of poets gay and grave,
I had read of knights and ladies,
The beautiful, the brave.

Still through my glowing fancy
Came floating visions bright,
The hero's sword of battle
The poet's crown of light.

I saw a bright procession—
And I would I saw it now—
With a star on every forehead
And the bay on every brow.

XII

THE STUDENT'S TEMPTATION

Faust in his study, drowsy, the lamp burning low, day beginning to break.—Chorus of Spirits :

Night is passing !
In the sky the stars are paling,
Birds are waking, day is breaking,
Sleep no more !

Day is passing !
In the west the red sun sinketh,
Flowers are sleeping, stars are peeping,
Work no more !

Youth is passing !
Life's brief spring will soon be o'er,
Flowers are dying, summer's flying,
Wait no more !

XIII

JUNE IN CAMBRIDGE

Another June is passing,
And faded is the may,
And still o'er books I linger
The livelong summer day.

For me there is no summer,
No deep woods sunlight-pied,
No purple heather on the hill
A wimpling burn beside.

For me no rippling river
Flows on by weald and wold,
With lilies on its bosom
And its feet on sands of gold.

I shall not feel the breezes,
I may not smell the sea
That breaks to-day in Scotland
On shores how dear to me!

I'm far away, dear Scotland,
A prisoner in the halls
Where sluggish Cam steals silent
By ancient English walls.

Still, still I con old pages
And through great volumes wade,
While life's brief summer passes,
And youth's brief roses fade.

Ah yes! Through these dull pages
A glimmering vista opes,
Where fairer flowers are blowing
Than bloom on earthly slopes.

The dreamland world of fancy!
There is my own true home,
There are the purple mountains
And blue seas fringed with foam.

And there the deathless garlands
That crown the chosen head,
When youth's brief June is over,
And youth's brief roses dead.

XIV

MY OLD STUDY

FINALLY, I thank the members, present and past, of the Council of Trinity College who, by thrice prolonging my Fellowship, have enabled me, free from sordid care, to pass my days in "the calm and still air of delightful studies" amid surroundings of all others the most congenial to learning. The windows of my study look on the tranquil court of an ancient college, where the sundial marks the silent passage of the hours, and in the long summer days the fountain plashes drowsily amid flowers and grass; where, as the evening shadows deepen, the lights come out in the blazoned windows of the Elizabethan hall, and from the chapel the sweet voices of the choir, blent with the pealing music of the organ, float on the peaceful air, telling of man's eternal aspirations after truth and goodness and immortality. Here, if anywhere, remote from the tumult and bustle of the world with its pomps and vanities and ambitions, the student may hope to hear the still voice of truth, to penetrate through the little transitory questions of the hour to the realities which abide, or rather which we fondly think must abide, while the generations come and go. I cannot be too thankful that I have been allowed to spend so many quiet and happy years in such a scene, and when I quit my old college rooms, as I soon shall do, for

another home in Cambridge, I shall hope to carry forward to new work in a new scene the love of study and labour which has been, not indeed implanted, but fostered and cherished in this ancient home of learning and peace.

XV

A DREAM OF CAMBRIDGE

Last night I slept and dreamed a dream. I thought I was once more in Cambridge, and in my old rooms looking out on the Great Court of Trinity. It was evening and the window was open. Across the court I saw again, as I had seen so often, the lighted windows of the hall, and above the roof of the Master's lodge the evening star like a silver lamp hung low in the western sky. In the chapel close at hand the organ was playing and the choir was singing. When their voices ceased and the deep rolling notes of the organ had died away into silence, I heard a footfall on the stair. It drew near, a tap followed, the door opened, and the figure of a dear friend entered. He has long been in his grave, but last night I saw him again as in life. He said, "I am tired. Will you walk with me a little in the court? Perhaps I shall sleep the better for it." I put out my lamp and we descended the stairs together.

When we issued on the court the moon had risen. How pale and ghostly the roofs looked in her silvery light, how blanched and wan the flowers in their bed about the fountain, where the falling water plashed with a murmurous sound as soft as sleep! We passed the windows of the hall, now dark, silent, and deserted, and, ascending the steps, traversed the

screens and emerged on the terrace overlooking Neville's Court. Around us lay the cloisters, on the one side shrouded in deep darkness, on the other side flooded with the broad moonbeams, only the shadows of the pillars showing like black bars on the pavement. We paced them for a time in discourse, as of old, on friends and books, on Nature's loveliness, on the glories of the antique world, on the vision, the beatific vision, of a Golden Age to come. Then, quitting the cloisters, we passed under the archway and entered the long avenue of limes, where the interlacing branches cast a chequer-work of shadow on the moonlit path. We paused on the bridge over the river. How sweet the moonlight slept upon the water and silvered all the foliage of the trees that drooped their pendent boughs into the placid stream, while the white bridges, like sheeted ghosts, receded line beyond line into the distance—a scene of enchantment or fairyland forlorn!

And now, with the inconstancy of dreams, the season and the landscape suddenly changed. It was a sunshiny afternoon in May. The college gardens through which we passed were gay with the pink and white blossoms of the chestnuts, with the purple and gold of the lilac and laburnum. Beyond them we entered the fields and followed the footpath beside the long hedgerow under the dappled shade of the tall elms. The hedges were white with the hawthorn bloom, and the air was heavy with its fragrance. Yet farther on we crossed the meadows, starred with buttercups and daisies, and passed through the graveyard of the little old Coton church, with its grey tower rising among the trees and its moss-grown headstones sleeping among the grass. Thence by the familiar footpath we ascended the slope of Madingley Hill.

Insensibly as we advanced the season seemed to change, for now the snow-white blossom of the hawthorn in the hedges had turned to red roses, and now in the fields around us the yellow corn, spangled with scarlet poppies, stood ripe for the sickle; and yet again the woods that fringed the crest of the hill showed here and there the russet hues of autumn. On gaining the summit we stood once more, as we had stood so often, near the ruined windmill (few now remember it!), to survey the landscape, the far-spreading peaceful landscape, before bending our steps homeward. To the right the spire of Coton church just peeped over the shoulder of the hill, like a finger pointing steadfastly from the transient tumults and sorrows of earth to the eternal peace and joy of heaven. At our feet the high road ran down the slope, and then, girt with trees, flowed away like a wave in green undulations to the distant woods, above which appeared the spires and pinnacles of Cambridge. Beyond them we could discern the low blue line of the Gog Magog hills with the white scar of the high road climbing their steep side, while away to the north the towers of Ely Cathedral loomed like specks on the far horizon, faint and dim as dreams.

After contemplating the scene for a time in silence we turned to descend the hill. Before we did so I said to my companion, "Last night I dreamed an ill dream". "What was it?" he asked. "I dreamed," I said, "that you were dead, and that I had left Cambridge for ever." "But it was only a dream," he answered, smiling, "for here I am, and yonder, among the woods, is Cambridge. We shall soon be there together." As he spoke he suddenly vanished. I looked about me, but the landscape on

which but a moment before I had gazed with rapture was gone, and I heard a voice like the sighing of the wind which cried, "For ever! for ever!" I woke with a start. The grey light of a London morning was stealing through the curtains, and still, half sleeping, half waking, I heard a voice dying away in the distance, which cried, "For ever! for ever!"

XVI

MEMORIES OF YOUTH

To-night, with the muffled roar of London in my ears, I look down the long vista of the past and see again the little white town by the sea, the hills above it tinged with the warm sunset light. I hear again the soft music of the evening bells, the bells of which they told us in our childhood, that though we did not heed them now, we would remember them when we were old. Across the bay, in the deepening shadow, lies sweet Roseneath, embowered in its woods, and beyond the dark and slumbrous waters of the loch peep glimmering through the twilight the low green hills of Gareloch, while above them tower far into the glory of the sunset sky the rugged mountains of Loch Long. Home of my youth! There in the little house in the garden—the garden where it seems to me now that it was always summer and the flowers were always bright—the garden where the burn winds wimpling over the pebbles under the red sandstone cliffs—I dreamed the long, long dreams of youth. A mist, born not of the sea, rises up and hides the scene. And as the vision fades, like many a dream of youth before, I look out into the night, and see the lights and hear again the muffled roar of London.

XVII

LIFE'S FITFUL FEVER

Apart from all questions of its religious and historical import, which do not here concern us, the Bible is an epic, if not a history, of the world ; or, to change the metaphor, it unrolls a vast panorama in which the ages of the world move before us in a long train of solemn imagery, from the creation of the earth and the heavens onward to the final passing away of all this material universe and the coming of a new heaven and a new earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness. Against this gorgeous background, this ever shifting scenery, now bright with the hues of heaven, now lurid with the glare of hell, we see mankind strutting and playing their little part on the stage of history. We see them taken from the dust and returning to the dust. We see the rise and fall of empires : we see great cities, now the hive of busy multitudes, now silent and desolate, a den of wild beasts. All life's fever is there—its loves and hopes and joys, its high endeavours, its suffering and sin and sorrow. And then, last scene of all, we see the great white throne and the endless multitude gathered before it : we hear the final doom pronounced ; and as the curtain falls we catch a glimpse of the fires of hell and the glories of heaven—a vision of a world (how different from this !) where care and sin and sorrow shall be no more,

where the saints shall rest from their labours, and where God Himself shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. This may not be science and history, but it is at least an impressive pageant, a stately drama: without metaphor, it is noble literature, and like all noble literature it is fitted to delight, to elevate, and to console.

XVIII

BEYOND THE SHADOWS

It is gratifying to me to observe that the example which I set of treating the Bible as pure literature has since been followed by others, who have similarly edited the Old and New Testaments or portions of them in a form divested, as far as possible, of all purely theological import. The publication of such books may be welcomed as a sign that the love of the Bible is not confined to those who accept its dogmas. Though many of us can no longer, like our fathers, find in its pages the solution of the dark, the inscrutable riddle of human existence, yet the volume must still be held sacred by all who reverence the high aspirations to which it gives utterance, and the pathetic associations with which the faith and piety of so many generations have invested the familiar words. The reading of it breaks into the dull round of common life like a shaft of sunlight on a cloudy day, or a strain of solemn music heard in a mean street. It seems to lift us for a while out of ourselves, our little cares and little sorrows, into communion with those higher powers, whatever they are, which existed before man began to be, and which will exist when the whole human race, as we are daily reminded by the cataclysms and convulsions of Nature, shall be swept out of existence

for ever. It strengthens in us the blind conviction, or the trembling hope, that somewhere, beyond these earthly shadows, there is a world of light eternal, where the obstinate questionings of the mind will be answered and the heart find rest.

XIX

AD LIBELLUM SUUM
AUCTOR

En ultimam tibi manum dedi : iam evoles quaeso e fumo strepituque huius maximae rerum urbis : iam hortos petas apricos locosque quietis et tranquillitatis plenissimos, quos ego non sine desiderio recordor. Subit enim saepe vel vigilantis vel dormientis animo species aulae illius et fonte pellucido et floribus purpureis distinctae : subit taciturni fluminis imago antiquos subterlabentis muros : videor mihi adhuc prata illa amoena cum caris pererrans amicis benigno aestivam sermone noctem tendere : videor mihi adhuc audire suaves sacri illius chori voces vesperascente die quasi occiduum solem canoro deflentis concentu. Ah quotiens ibi volvente anno et albis incanescentem rosis sepem et flavam puniceis intermixtam papaveribus Cererem admiratus sum ! Quotiens silvas illas, quae longinquum supereminent collem, iam vernis virescentes solibus iam auctumnali rubescentes frigore vidi ! Quotiens me lento devexum amni spissa arborum aestus levantium recreavit umbra, dum vel aquarum murmur cadentium vel populearum susurrus frondium levem inire somnum suadebat ! O rura mihi prae Fortunatorum insulis illis cara ! O arva me iudice fabulosis Hesperidum hortis beatiora !

Quam suaviter ibi olim longos fallentibus annos studiis incubui! Quam libenter ibi et ipso consumerer aevo et supremum conderem diem! Utcunque erit, iuvabit tamen diu ibi vixisse et pro virili parte vacavisse Musis. Scilicet beatus ille mihi prae ceteris esse videtur qui in veri investigatione totus versatur a rumoribus hominum et invidia et prava ambitione longe remotus ac ne mortis quidem metu perturbatus: etenim dum immensas caeli terraeque regiones, dum infinitam et praeteriti temporis et futuri seriem mente contemplatur, fit ut animus a pusillis negotiis curisque aversus et in rerum cognitione defixus fragilitatem humanam quodammodo exuat et immortalitatem nescio quam cogitando capessat. Hac vita qui fruitur non regibus invidet purpureis, non triumphali scandentibus Capitolium curru, non Olympiaca superbientibus palma. Haec nobis omnibus, quibus florem aetatis ibi carpere contigit, iuvenibus arridebant: haec senibus memoria recolentibus placent: haec ut post nos quam plurimis et iuvenibus et senibus edaci intacta tempore placeant, quidquid in caelo deorum est nuncupatis votis precamur et oramus.

Scribebam Londini
intra sacratos terminos Templi
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THE END

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